# RESURRECTION OF THE DALEKS

# DOCTOR WHO

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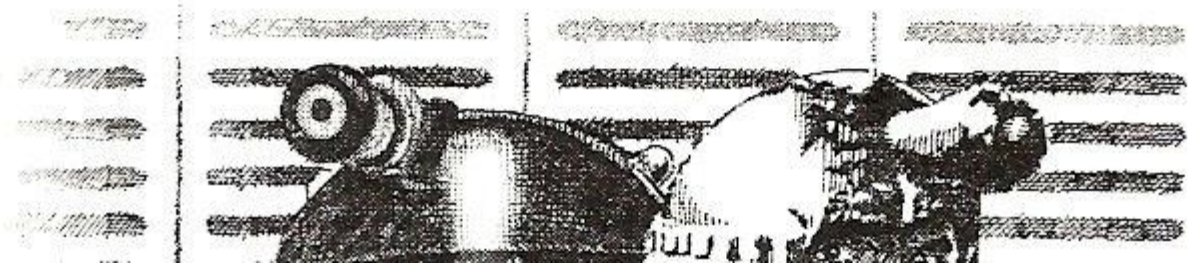

# PAUL SCOONES

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# DOCTOR WHO

# RESURRECTION OF THE

# DALEKS

Based on the BBC television serial by Eric Saward PAUL SCOONES

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The BBC producer of Resurrection of the Daleks was John Nathan-Turner The director was Matthew Robinson

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Cover illustration by Alistair Hughes

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Author's Note

There are just five stories which do not appear in the Target series of Doctor Who novelisations. Adaptations of four of these - The Pirate Planet, City of Death, Shada and Revela-tion of the Daleks - have previously been published by TSV and this book completes the set.

I began writing this novelisation in 1989 and, after many stops and starts, the first draft was completed in 1992. My plans to publish the book were then abandoned when news began circulating of a forthcoming adaptation of the story by its writer, Eric Saward.

The non-existent Target novelisation of Resurrection of the Daleks was apparently at first delayed due to a disagreement between Eric Saward and the publishers over payment to Terry Nation for the use of the Daleks. This apparently prevented the book's publication for many years. In the early nineties Saward agreed to adapt the story for Target owners, Virgin Publishing but the delivery was repeatedly delayed. In 1996 Virgin proposed that another author, Paul Leonard, take on the adaptation, but Saward apparently vetoed this.

The loss of Virgin's Doctor Who book publishing licence in 1997 has made it highly im-probable that an official novelisation will now eventuate.

For this reason, I have resurrected this adaptation and committed it to print ten years after I first began work on the prologue.

Readers may notice influences within these pages from the novelisation of Remembrance of the Daleks by Ben Aaronovitch, a book which provided a frequent source of in-spiration.

Thanks are due to Jon Preddle who has been very encouraging about this project over the years. Jon transcribed the story from video for me and supplied BBC rehearsal

scripts which have enabled me to reinstate segments cut from the broadcast version. I am also grateful to Phillip J. Gray for both providing a very thorough critique and giving the manu-script a much-needed 'final polish'. David Bishop, Neil Lambess, Chris Mander, David Ronayne, Peter Adamson and Rochelle Thickpenny are all deserving of mention for providing help and constructive feedback at some point over the years. Thanks are also due to Alistair Hughes for his brilliant work on the cover.

For me, the publication of this book is a significant event as it marks the conclusion of my personal goal to have a novelisation of every Doctor Who television story sitting on my shelf. When I began collecting the Target books twenty years ago, little did I realise that I would have to finish the job myself!

Paul Scoones

November 1999

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The Doctor:

'Davros, if you had created a virus in your laboratory. Something contagious and infectious that killed on contact. A virus that would destroy all other forms of life… would you allow its use?'

Davros:

'It is an interesting conjecture.'

The Doctor:

'Would you do it?'

Davros:

'The only living thing… a microscopic organism… reigning supreme… A fascinating idea.'

The Doctor:

‘But would you do it?’

Davros:

‘Yes. Yes. To hold in my hand, a capsule that contained such power. To know that life and death on such a scale was my choice. To know that the tiny pressure of my thumb, enough to break the glass, would end everything. Yes. I would do it!

That power would set me up above the gods. And through the Daleks I shall have that power!’

Genesis of the Daleks

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Davros:

‘So, the long darkness has ended… An eternity of waiting is over. The resurrection has come as I always knew it would.’

Destiny of the Daleks

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# Prologue

The battered wreck of the colony ship was nestled in a shallow valley, with a meagre huddle of crudely-constructed buildings clustered along its flanks. Workers scurried around the settlement, busily preoccupied with restoring order to their lives.

The time of chaos on Frontios was over at last. There would be no more bombardments from the skies. At first the colonists had celebrated their good fortune, but they had now begun the task of rebuilding the colony. These survivors of the destruction of Earth were at last unhindered as they set out on what they termed the Long Path back to knowledge.

This was all thanks to the intervention of a Time Lord known as the Doctor, and his companions Tegan and Turlough. The trio were gathered beside the Doctor's TARDIS

bidding farewell to the colonists.

The Gravis, a creature capable of considerable gravitational power, had been responsible for the years of meteor bombardment suffered by colonists. The Doctor had marooned the creature on the uninhabited world of Kolkokron.

'He's exercising his animal magnetism on the rocks and boulders,' the Doctor joked lightly.

'It's nothing but rocks and boulders out there,' said Tegan, suddenly very much aware of the import of her words to what were the descendants of her race. 'All the planets are deserted, according to the TARDIS scanners.'

'So the last of Mankind is, after all, quite alone,' observed the colony leader, Plantagenet.

'Alone, but in good hands, Plantagenet,' the Doctor assured him. 'Speaking of which, I know it's not much, but, a farewell token.' He presented the colony leader with the TARDIS hat-stand, a souvenir of their recent experiences.

'Frontios is honoured,' replied Plantagenet, 'but surely you'll stay a while longer and enjoy some of the new colony we're building?'

'Oh, no, far too much of my own repair work to be done,' explained the Doctor hastily, edging back towards his waiting craft. 'And besides,' he added, 'time and the Time Lords don't permit it. There's an etiquette about these things which we've rather overlooked.'

'But Doctor,' Plantagenet's deputy, Mr Range, protested, 'you've done so much for us!'

The Doctor coloured slightly, and visibly winced. ‘Yes, quite.’ He lingered for a moment in the TARDIS doorway. ‘Don’t mention it,’ he advised the colonists and abruptly disappeared inside.

Range’s daughter Norna, standing close by Turlough, shook her head in wonderment.

‘After all he’s done, he just says ‘don’t mention it’!’

‘He means it literally!’ Tegan smiled, and then followed the Doctor into the police box interior.

‘Don’t mention it,’ Turlough advised, echoing the Doctor’s words. ‘To anyone,’ he added, illustrating this with a cutting gesture of his hand. He followed Tegan into the 7

TARDIS, closing the door behind him. Moments later, the time craft dematerialised.

Plantagenet studied the Doctor’s gift thoughtfully, already formulating plans for a town square with the hat-stand as a central monument. Picking it up, he and Range walked away.

Norna made to follow them, but hesitated as she heard something jangle in her trouser pocket. She pulled out a couple of small, oddly-shaped pieces of metal, given to her much earlier by Turlough. They were coins, part of the currency on Turlough’s homeworld. Each coin had a small hole drilled through the centre. Norna recalled his words: ‘It’s a two cor-pira piece. You blow through the hole for luck.’

The colony had its hat-stand, but for Norna, the coins would serve as a reminder of her brief friendship with Turlough. She put one of the coins to her lips and blew.

‘Good luck,’ she murmured, but no one heard.

The Doctor had gone off to check on Kamelion, the shape-changing robot he’d acquired on his travels. The automaton had developed a fault soon after its arrival, and despite the Doctor’s frequent tinkering, Kamelion spent most of its time in a deactivated state. ‘Now listen you two,’ the Doctor said, as he arrived back in the console room, ‘if the Time Lords ever hear about our little trip to Frontios there will be serious trouble.’

At that moment a sudden groaning sound filled the room. The Doctor frowned and put his ear to the console.

‘What would have happened if we hadn’t been there, Doctor?’ Turlough inquired curiously.

‘The TARDIS engines would be working properly, for one thing,’ Tegan replied, ever critical of the Time Lord’s control of his craft.

The Doctor, resorting to his cure for all technological ills, thumped the console with his fist. ‘Oh, there’s nothing wrong with them,’ he replied insincerely.

‘Then why are they making that funny noise?’ Tegan wanted to know as the groaning sound increased audibly in pitch.

Turlough consulted the flight computer. ‘We’re going far too fast, Doctor,’ he observed mildly.

The Doctor hurried over to see for himself.

‘Stop the engines,’ Turlough suggested, as the noise increased even more, and the console room began to shudder under stress.

The Doctor tried to appear unconcerned. ‘No, no, leave them. This will pass shortly.

They’re all right.’

The groaning sound was joined by a clanking noise, accompanied by a jolt which had the trio gripping the console for support.

‘What’s happening?’ shouted Turlough, as the floor tilted alarmingly and his feet began to slip out from under him.

‘The Gravis?’ suggested Tegan helpfully.

‘Oh, no; this is something more powerful!’ the Doctor explained, clearly worried now.

‘We’re being pulled into a time corridor. Trying to pull against...’ He frantically punched in a series of course corrections, but the TARDIS failed to respond.

‘A time corridor?’ Tegan echoed, confused. ‘Where?’

‘I don’t know,’ the Doctor confessed, ‘but I think we’re about to find out!’

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1

Fugitives from the Future

They were running from death.

The heavy warehouse doors crashed open, abruptly shattering the early morning peace, and disturbing a slumbering tramp in a nearby alcove. Two men ran out into the street.

Galloway, the taller of the pair, slowed to a halt. He winced at the fine drizzle of rain and bright sunlight as he looked up at the tall, imposing brick warehouses and the rusty iron catwalks criss-crossing high overhead. It was clear that he hadn't the faintest idea where he was.

Stien, his companion, appeared just as disorientated. 'Which way?' he demanded.

Galloway had already started to run. 'Does it matter?' he called back Stien scurried after him.

The tramp had not been noticed. Blinking in the early morning light, he peered distastefully out at the persistent cold drizzle. He huddled deeper into his old and grubby layers of clothing, and watched the two men run off down the street. The tramp was used to seeing the occasional group of workmen around the docklands, turning some of the deserted old brick buildings into apartments, but their attire and behaviour were not consistent with workmen. He peered out of the alcove, but the strangers had disappeared from view. Further noises drew his attention sharply back to the warehouse.

Moments later, six more people in strange attire burst through the warehouse doors. As with their two predecessors, the new arrivals lingered in the street, confused by their surroundings.

'Where are we?' one of them asked, but the question received no answer. It was evident that not one of them had the faintest idea.

Rather than running off, as the other two had done, the new arrivals turned their attention to the open doors of the warehouse and hurriedly set about closing them.

They almost succeeded.

As the tramp looked on in mounting bewilderment, he saw the doors almost meet, then suddenly start to open again, pushed from the inside. All six individuals leant their weight to the task, but at best they could only just hold them in position.

One of them yelled 'Let's get out of here!'

Arriving at the shared realisation that they could not win this battle, the group released the doors and moved out into the street at a run. The doors slammed open immediately and three policemen marched out of the building.

One of the trio was clearly a senior officer, wearing a blue great-coat and a peaked cap.

He hung back while his two companions, dressed in the smart blue uniforms of British policemen, complete with helmet and radio, hurried forward in pursuit of the six runners.

The tramp, all too familiar with the police and their presence here, confirmed his suspicion that the runners were criminals; possibly prison escapers. He leaned further out of his alcove for a better look - and stared in astonishment as the two constables brought out 9

stubby automatic machine pistols.

One of the officers brought his weapon to bear on the nearest of the runners and fired.

His victim screamed once, then fell and lay still.

The remaining five split up, looking desperately for non-existent cover in the open brick canyon. One of the runners brushed right past the tramp without appearing to notice him. The policeman took aim and fired. Another body fell.

Within moments, the six runners lay dead in the street. Each shot had found its target, with murderous precision. The policemen walked towards the bodies, and as they approached the tramp's alcove, the nearest of the two officers turned in his direction. Before the tramp could react, a single high velocity bullet pierced his heart. His body crumpled and pitched forward into the street.

It was beginning to rain again, and a gentle patter of raindrops slowly soaked the bodies. Commander Gustave Lytton reached into one of the pockets of his heavy blue greatcoat and withdrew a yellow coloured device which fitted snugly into the palm of his hand.

A single slide control was recessed on its face. Lytton raised the device in his hand, and the two policemen raised their weapons. Lytton took one last look around, then prodded the control with his thumb. The light activated on the device, and a bright ruby-red aura surrounded all seven bodies. As the aura faded, so did the bodies. Lytton activated the device again, and the same aura surrounded him and the two machine pistols held by his companions.

As the policemen looked on, Lytton and their weapons dematerialised. The pair turned away and, without exchanging a word, walked away with the carefully measured tread of policemen on the beat.

Moments minute later, Galloway peered out from an open doorway and noted that the policemen had disappeared from sight. He signalled the all-clear to his companion.

'Where have they gone?' asked Stien with a nervous stammer, as the pair edged cautiously back up the street towards the warehouse.

'Where do you think?' replied his companion disparagingly. 'Come on!'

Thousands of million kilometres from Earth and several hundred years in the future, a large fearsome-looking battle cruiser held position in deep space.

Within the depths of the craft, Lytton re-materialised within the same ruby-red aura, in a white, featureless chamber. He stood over a pile of crumpled bodies like a victorious warrior.

His mood was far from triumphant however as he stepped over the corpses, ducked under a slowly ascending shutter, and walked out into a reception area where six troopers in full battledress were waiting to receive him. They hastened to remove the bodies from the time corridor terminal chamber.

Lytton flung his police sergeant's cap aside and glowered at Trooper Leader Grogan, who had just entered the chamber.

'That was a shambles!' growled Lytton, shoving the machine pistols he was holding into Grogan's hands. He pulled angrily at the buttons of his coat.

'The escape was prevented,' Grogan replied in a level tone.

'They got out of the warehouse. It should never have happened,' said Lytton, going over to an equipment locker recessed into a wall. He placed the yellow control device into it, then took the machine pistols from Grogan and tossed them in after it. 'And who ordered the use of machine pistols?' Lytton inquired, shrugging off his greatcoat.

'Standing orders,' Grogan informed his commander, as Lytton stowed the coat in the locker. 'Nothing anachronistic is to be taken to Earth.'

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Lytton clearly found this stricture unacceptable. 'So instead we slaughter valuable specimens,' he replied, glancing pointedly at the last of the bodies as it was carried out of the chamber. 'Next time stun lasers are to be used!'

'It was an unfortunate mistake!' Grogan protested.

'Make it your last,' Lytton advised, as he left the reception area, unbuttoning his uniform jacket. 'Otherwise the next execution squad will be coming for you.' Lytton stalked off down a corridor.

Grogan started after him, but was halted by the trooper he had placed in charge of corpse disposal. 'Sir, not all of the targets have been accounted for,' he reported urgently.

'Commander Lytton should be informed at once.'

‘That won’t be necessary,’ Grogan replied. ‘We’ll handle this one ourselves.’

Grogan rejoined Lytton on the dimly illuminated bridge of the battle cruiser. The main source of light was a brightly glowing view-sphere mounted on a pedestal in the center of the small chamber. Lytton, now clothed in the jet black uniform of a trooper, studying the starscape projection within the sphere. He appeared oblivious to the crew operating the flight consoles.

‘Checklist completed,’ Grogan reported. ‘All systems functioning.’

Lytton nodded. ‘Raise the forceshield,’ he ordered. ‘All troopers to battle stations.’ He allowed himself a slight smile before delivering his next order.

‘Battle speed!’

Galloway peered cautiously into the warehouse interior.

‘What if they’re still in there?’ hissed Stien. ‘Waiting?’

Galloway glared at him. ‘We must warn our own people,’ he replied, and darted off into the building’s dark interior.

Reluctantly, Stien followed Galloway inside.

Galloway was already climbing the stairs to the upper level.

‘You’re going to use the time corridor?!’ Stien gasped incredulously.

Galloway turned and looked down at Stien with an expression of disgust. ‘You said you were a soldier; have you no sense of loyalty?’

‘I’m a quartermaster sergeant,’ Stien protested defensively. ‘I’m not combat trained. I can’t support your sort of principles.’ His companion ignored him and continued up the stairs. ‘Look at me,’ Stien complained, as he started to climb. ‘I’m not exactly in condition. I can’t even run properly.’

Stien caught up with Galloway at the top of the stairs. ‘You’re pathetic,’ Galloway told him as he opened the door to the upper level.

‘That too,’ admitted Stien.

The upper level was deserted. Empty packing crates and rubbish were scattered around the floor. Brick partitions and thick concrete columns made a survey of the large room from any one perspective impossible, but it was clear from the deathly silence that they were alone.

‘They’re gone,’ said Galloway in a hollow, deflated voice.

‘They were probably all killed,’ Stien suggested. ‘They could have closed the time corridor down. Let’s get out of here,’ he added hopefully. ‘I’m scared.’

Galloway shot him a dismissive glance. ‘The entrance to the corridor is around here somewhere.’ He walked to the centre of the room and surveyed the floor.

‘Well there’s nothing there now,’ replied Stien.

A sudden, muffled sound startled both men.

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‘What was that?’ demanded Stien.

Galloway began moving slowly over to his companion. ‘A rodent,’ he replied without conviction.

Stien looked at him disbelievingly. ‘Wearing combat boots?’

Galloway spied a crowbar lying on a nearby crate. He picked it up and tested its weight, evidently planning to use it as an improvised weapon. ‘Back to the stairs,’ he instructed Stien. ‘Quickly!’

Stien needed no further encouragement. He darted back to the door, followed with more caution by Galloway, who backed away across the room, the crowbar held ready to attack.

Stien paused on the stairs, and called, ‘can you see anything?’

‘Get out of here!’ shouted Galloway.

Stien retreated further down the stairs.

Galloway was half-way to the door when he heard another noise behind him. He turned and saw a trooper step from behind one of the columns. The trooper held a machine pistol, levelled at Galloway’s chest.

Stien heard a sudden burst of gunfire, then silence.

‘Galloway?’ he called hopefully. ‘Galloway!’ He moved down a few steps, unwilling to go back to the upper level. ‘Oh, Galloway,’ he muttered miserably.

On the floor of the upper level, Galloway lay dead. The trooper activated a yellow, hand-held device, and both he and the body of Galloway faded away in a red haze.

Stien sat huddled against the railing of a rusty iron catwalk, high above the street, in the shadow of the building opposite the warehouse so that he could not be seen from the road.

He clutched at his stomach, feeling the first pangs of hunger, now that the immediate threat of death had passed. Stien's head throbbed badly as he tried to recall anything from before the time when he and Galloway had escaped from the warehouse. He could not even recall why they were there in the first place.

Fatigue overcame his troubled thoughts and he drifted into a haunted sleep, only to be woken minutes - or was it hours? - later by the sound of a vehicle stopping outside the warehouse, almost directly below the catwalk.

A man, in a uniform that Stien didn't recognise, got out of the front of the van and walked around to the back doors of the vehicle. The man banged on them with the palm of his hand and in response, the doors opened and three men and a woman piled out, carrying an assortment of boxes, bags and weapons. The three men were also in uniform, but the woman was unmistakably in civilian clothes, even to Stien, unfamiliar as he was with their attire. They were obviously soldiers.

One of the men checked off items on a clipboard, then slammed the van doors and signalled to the driver. The van started up and drove away. By the time it had left the street, the group had entered the warehouse and were closing the doors behind them.

Stien pondered on what he had just witnessed. There was something about soldiers that made him feel distinctly unsafe. He decided against announcing his presence to them, and settled back to rest further before venturing out from his place of hiding.

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2

Surprise Attack

Lieutenant Roylan Mercer was young, idealistic and frustrated. Seated in the command chair on the bridge of space station Cassius Four he was paradoxically in control of the entire station with its crew of more than thirty people, and at the same time powerless to effect any changes.

Unlike his fellow bridge crew members, this was his first time on duty. He had only been on board four days. Many of the crew had been living on the station for as many years.

Most shared the view that being in orbit around the outermost planet of Earth's star system held two distinct advantages. The first was that nothing life-threatening was ever likely to happen this far out, and the second was that being so far removed from the Prison Station Control Authority on Earth meant that the chances of a check on the station's efficiency was equally slim. As a result, the crew took a distinctly relaxed attitude to their duties, the consequences of which were evident throughout the station.

Mercer had seen nothing but sloppiness and neglect since his arrival on Cassius Four with the last supply freighter. The bridge, the nerve-centre of the station, was a disgrace.

Discarded cigarette butts littered the floor, and the overhead lighting panels were dimmed by years of accumulated dust and tobacco smoke. The seat coverings were torn and roughly repaired with tattered insulation tape. Several controls on the consoles were so worn or damaged that Mercer doubted their ability to function.

The bridge crew sat at various positions around the spacious chamber, ostensibly monitoring the status of both the station and the Cassius sector of space, but in reality they were reading, smoking, playing cards or listening to music on headphones; all except Mercer, who sat staring glumly at the console before him. The multi-coloured lights that still worked danced across his dark-skinned handsome features.

His mind was elsewhere, reliving the events of the previous day.

Mercer had been assigned to the station's science officer, Doctor Korin Styles, to be shown around the vessel. Styles was an attractive woman in her early forties - some ten years Mercer's senior - and wore a smart functional outfit consisting of a white tunic and trousers. A headband held back her long auburn hair. Mercer's first impression of her was that her neat and tidy appearance was very much at odds with the condition of her environment.

They were walking down one of the main corridors, a passage littered with abandoned tools, equipment and packing crates. Many of the lights overhead were out, and more inspection panels were lying on the floor or propped up against a convenient wall than were actually clipped in place. Cables hung in sagging loops when they should have been clipped securely to the ceiling, and the walls were streaked with substances that Mercer thought it wise not to examine too closely.

'I don't believe it,' Mercer said at last. 'How long has the station been in this state?'

Styles glanced at him briefly. ‘Since regular inspections ceased,’ she replied.

Mercer picked his way through the debris to join Styles at the door of her laboratory.

‘This place is falling to pieces,’ he observed disbelievingly.

‘And you’re seeing it on a good day,’ retorted Styles as she keyed the electronic lock.

‘If you wanted to see everything spick ‘n’ span, you shouldn’t have asked for a transfer to a prison station.’

Mercer was about to point out to her that his transfer wasn’t voluntary, but Styles was preoccupied with the door, which was stubbornly refusing to open for her. ‘Come on!’ she yelled, and kicked it. This seemed to be the solution to the problem, as the door slid open immediately.

The first thing that struck Mercer about Styles’s laboratory was its marked contrast with the corridor outside. The long thin room was well-lit, neat and tidy, and painted a gleaming surgical white. Even the large view-screen on the wall just inside the doorway appeared to have been polished.

Styles wandered over to a workbench, where a lone woman, dressed in the same style of uniform as Styles, sat working at a microscope, preparing slides.

‘This is my assistant, Zena,’ Styles said. ‘Zena, Lieutenant Mercer.’

Zena glanced up and gave him a quick smile, before returning to her work.

Mercer wandered around the room, marvelling at the contrast with what he’d seen of the rest of the station. ‘How do you cope with the mess?’ he asked.

Styles perched on a stool and regarded him with a frown. ‘By ignoring it,’ she replied frankly. ‘My only concern on this station is the medical welfare of the crew and the prisoner.’

Mercer felt suddenly angry at her complacency. ‘That’s a rather narrow view of your responsibility,’ he said coldly.

‘Oh shut up, will you!’ barked Styles, finally losing patience with Mercer’s attitude.

She jumped off her stool and marched over to stare him in the face. They scowled at each other. ‘It’s the only way to stay sane,’ she explained angrily. ‘You’ve only been here three days. You know nothing.’ She turned away.

Mercer was not so easily dismissed. ‘I’ve been here long enough to learn that the morale on this station is appalling,’ he retorted. He walked down to the far end of the chamber, where a large heavy hatch set into the wall had caught his attention. Upon closer inspection, he saw that it was an access point for the station’s escape craft.

‘If the Captain doesn’t care, why should I?’ countered Styles.

‘Why indeed!’

Styles sighed despairingly. ‘Look, my tour of duty finishes here in eight weeks time.

I’m dependent on a good report from the Captain for my next promotion.’

‘I see,’ said Mercer, moving back up the room.

‘I don’t think you do,’ Styles told him. ‘If I don’t get a good report, I could be stuck here for another two years.’

Mercer detected the note of desperation in her voice, and for the first time began to ap-preciate what he was in for himself. ‘If Control were aware of the morale on this station, the Captain would be instantly relieved of his command,’ he reasoned levelly.

Styles stared at the tall dark officer for a moment, a fleeting glimpse of hope in her eyes, and then she looked away, shaking her head slowly. ‘It’s been tried,’ she informed him flatly. ‘Usually by inexperienced new boys like you. And the way you’re carrying on, you’ll finish up like the others.’

‘Meaning?’

‘Dead. You’re the third security officer we’ve had in four years.’

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‘How long is your tour of duty?’

The question broke Mercer out of his reverie. Looking around, he saw that his questioner was a young, petite dark-skinned woman in the seat next to his. They had been introduced, but hadn’t spoken much since. He fished about in his memory and came up with a name: Aliza Osborn.

Osborn flashed him a friendly smile and stubbed out the butt of her cigarette on the edge of the console.

‘Two years,’ answered Mercer, and then turned away slightly, reluctant to be drawn into a conversation. The two crewmembers on the other side of him were conversing over a game of cards.

‘The Captain usually allows new arrivals to settle in before subjecting them to the te-dium of Officer of the Watch.’

Mercer swivelled his chair back to face Osborn, and tried to gauge whether her smile was mocking or sympathetic. He’d never been very adept at social relations.

‘What did you do?’ she inquired.

‘I complained,’ he confessed.

Osborn’s smile broadened. ‘Someone should have warned you.’

Mercer neglected to point out that he had been warned. ‘I had every right,’ he protested.

‘Have you seen the state of the defence system?’

Osborn frowned. ‘You fear an attack?’ she asked incredulously.

‘That’s not the point,’ he continued defensively.

‘Oh, I wouldn’t worry about it,’ she advised. ‘The only ship we ever see around here is our supply vessel.’

A crewman seated on the other side of Osborn’s position suddenly spoke up. ‘I think you may have spoken too soon,’ he interjected. ‘Sensors have picked up a ship in warp drive that has just entered the Exclusion Zone.’

The Exclusion Zone was a designated region of space extending several thousand kilometres in all directions from the station and the nearby planet Cassius.

Mercer tensed. No ships were expected in the area for the next two months. ‘Inform the Captain,’ he responded.

But Osborn held up her hand to placate him. ‘I wouldn’t bother him,’ she said, knowing only too well from past experience that it was inadvisable to disturb the Captain unless absolutely necessary. ‘Not yet. It could be anything. Let the fighters check it out first,’ she proposed.

Mercer was incredulous. ‘What?!’

‘They’ll be grateful for the practice.’ Without waiting for his reply, she clipped on a communications headset and gave instructions to launch the station’s squadron of four, one-person fighter craft immediately.

‘The regulations specifically state that the Captain is to be informed,’ Mercer persisted, adamant now.

‘Look what happened the last time you spoke to him,’ Osborn reasoned, but she could see that the young lieutenant was far from convinced. ‘If it’s hostile, the fighters will deal with it,’ she added encouragingly, and concentrated on the messages coming in over her headset.

‘Fighter leader has made visual contact,’ she said after a pause. Her eyes widened in sheer disbelief. ‘It’s a battle cruiser!’

Mercer sprang to his feet. ‘Go to red alert,’ he ordered, raising his voice to reach the entire bridge crew. ‘Inform the Captain.’ This time, there were no objections.

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The crewman who had first reported the ship’s arrival, a thin gangly man called Phin, was frantically operating controls on his console. ‘Sensors report we’re being scanned, sir!’ he called out.

‘Red alert at once!’ Mercer repeated.

Osborn reached out and flicked a switch isolated from the rest, and immediately a klaxon began to scream out its warning cry.

‘Operate deflector shield,’ Mercer ordered.

Phin complied. ‘Power building.’

‘Seal airlocks.’

Phin moved to another series of controls.

‘The battle cruiser has attacked the fighters,’ Osborn reported.

Mercer winced, his knuckles turning white as he gripped the back of his chair hard. He knew that the four tiny short range fighter craft stood no chance of success against a battle cruiser. ‘Can we give them any supporting fire?’ he asked desperately.

Osborn glanced at the power reserves indicator. The weaponry banks were in the process of charging up. She shook her head. ‘No, not at the moment.’

Phin watched his board as the indicator lights for all six airlocks went out one after the other. One light however continued to flash. ‘All but airlock three sealed,’ he called out.

‘Alert maintenance,’ replied Mercer instantly.

The Cassius Four space station had been operational for just over a century and in all that time, not even the most dense meteor storms had budged the craft. Its crew had come to expect that the station would remain as stable as terra firma. When the first volley of plasma blots sliced though the shields and punched a hole in the hull as if it were tissue paper, the station shuddered violently under the impact. For a second the artificial gravity fields failed to compensate. Vital oxygen voided through the gaping hole in the station’s aft section until the emergency shutters engaged, sealing off the damaged area - and all within it.

Every light went out, and in some areas the much dimmer emergency lighting came on.

The bridge was plunged into a gloomy half-light and no-one spoke for a moment while the terrible reality of their situation sunk in.

Phin broke the silence as soon as he had scrambled back to his position. ‘We’ve been hit!’ he yelled, rather unnecessarily.

Mercer stared at the console. Most of the screens had gone dark. ‘What’s happening?’

he demanded. ‘What’s happening?’

Osborn attempted to filter out the messages coming in over her headset. ‘Engineering reports extensive damage to the generating plant.’

Phin managed to bring what remained of the external sensors back on line. They, too, told a grim story. ‘Cruiser closing in, sir,’ he reported.

‘I’ve lost contact with the fighters,’ Osborn added. No-one had to guess what might have happened to the four craft.

‘Open fire!’ ordered Mercer. No-one complied. ‘I said open fire!’ he repeated.

Phin swung around in his seat, his expression one of sheer terror. ‘We can’t. We don’t have enough power for the laser cannons. We are defenceless!’

The station rocked under a second barrage of blaster fire. The emergency lighting flickered, and one of the consoles began to spark and smoke. Two crewmembers grabbed extin-guishers and sprayed the fire.

Mercer ran over to a large, sealed wall locker containing the station’s armoury. He pulled out his security card and swiped it through a read-slot before tapping in his security 16

code. As soon as the locker opened, he pillaged its contents.

Phin looked on in alarm at what Mercer was obviously intending to do. ‘Look, we should surrender,’ he proposed.

Mercer paused, his arms loaded with blasters and explosive packs. ‘No,’ he stated sharply.

Osborn came over to lend her support. ‘But we can’t fight,’ she reasoned. ‘We don’t even have a deflector shield.’

At this moment, the lift doors at the rear of the bridge opened and Styles stormed in, her once pristine white tunic soiled with dirt and streaks of blood. ‘Mercer!’ she shouted.

‘How much longer is this slaughter to continue?’

‘Where’s the Captain?’ he responded, anxious to be relieved of at least some of the responsibility of leadership.

‘Dead,’ said Styles bluntly. ‘Along with half the crew.’

‘Half?’ echoed Phin, stunned.

Styles nodded. ‘Just about everyone who wasn’t on duty was in the recreation centre -

including the Captain. The entire section was sealed off after it was hit.’ Her voice sounded strained, close to breaking point.

‘Battle cruiser preparing to dock,’ reported Osborn as she attempted to bring some of the station’s damaged systems back on line.

I am the commanding officer now, thought Mercer, but the idea did not cheer him one bit. Any moment now they could all die. Then what would his rapid promotion be worth?

‘Which airlock?’ he quizzed Osborn.

Osborn punched in a computer projection of the cruiser’s flight path since its detection and predicted its intersection with the station. ‘Three,’ she concluded, a troubled look on her face. ‘The maintenance team are still working on it.’

‘I want every available person down there. Block the corridor with anything they can find.’

Osborn relayed Mercer’s order into her headset mike as Mercer off-loaded some of his armload of weaponry on the bridge crew.

Styles regarded a hand laser distastefully. ‘More killing?’

Mercer rounded on her suddenly, and for a moment she believed he was going to hit her, but instead he snapped ‘Your bile would be better directed against the enemy, doctor.’

Styles turned away in disgust. Mercer stared at her for a moment, then joined Osborn at her console. She had managed to get one of the external view screens working. It displayed the massive battle cruiser. It was so close that Mercer could make out the shape of the individual hull plates. He didn’t recognise the design.

‘How long before they dock?’ asked Styles, peering over his shoulder.

‘Three minutes,’ Mercer told her, checking Osborn’s computer projection. ‘We’d better go down to the airlock.’

‘Right,’ agreed Styles.

Mercer stared at her once more, marvelling at her abrupt mood change. One moment she had been his strongest critic, the next his closest ally. ‘Break out the battle kits,’ he instructed.

Styles moved away to comply, and Mercer leaned in close to Osborn, pulling his security card from his pocket as he did so. ‘Should we be boarded,’ he said softly, handing her the card, ‘destroy the prisoner.’

Osborn glanced at the card and then at Mercer, but he was already hurrying towards the open lift doors where Styles stood waiting, laden with weapons and battle gear.

‘Good luck,’ he called back to Osborn, and then the doors closed and she was left as the 17

officer in charge on the bridge.

She punched up an internal view of the station on a view screen, selecting the security camera feed from Airlock Three. A number of maintenance people and other surviving crewmembers were variously working on closing the door or constructing a barricade a short distance from it.

Phin and the other crewmembers came over to watch the screen. Their very survival depended on the successful defence of Airlock Three.

While everyone on the bridge had their eyes on the screen, Osborn surreptitiously inserted the small plastic card Mercer had given her into a slit in a small box set into the console. She then pressed a sequence of buttons, and a small panel slid open, revealing a red button protected by a safety catch beneath. Osborn released the safety catch, then turned her attention back to the screen. One hand rested next to the armed trigger mechanism. Her fingers drummed nervously on the console surface.

Mercer and Styles ran down the corridor to the barricade, followed closely by two survivors they had encountered on their way, Styles’s assistant Zena and a male crewmember, Doran. All four had donned the battle kits that Styles had brought from the bridge.

‘Check how much longer the maintenance crew will be,’ Mercer instructed Styles, and began handing out weapons to the crew.

‘Right,’ Styles agreed, but before she could do so, the corridor echoed with a loud me-tallic boom, accompanied by a faint tremor.

‘The cruiser’s docked!’ yelled Mercer. ‘Get the shield down!’

All eight crewmembers turned their attention to the problem of sealing the airlock. The maintenance crew had not been able to fix the fault in the door closing mechanism. The only option left in the time remaining was to use brute force. They reached up and clutched the bottom of the door, and began to drag it down.

‘Come on, pull, pull!’ yelled Styles. The door started to shift.

Once budged, the door slid into place with relative ease. Mercer directed the crewmembers to get behind the barricades and with the help of an engineer, he began laying small compact explosive charges in a grove between two floor panels close to the door. Once in place, Mercer handed the engineer the small, hand-held remote control detonator, and they joined the others behind the barricade.

Mercer could feel the tension radiating from his crew. He glanced around, and saw that many were inadequately dressed for battle - most were wearing light coveralls or even off-duty clothing. It was too late to remedy that now, he thought. At least they were all armed with hand lasers. ‘Wait until I give the order,’ he instructed them quietly.

The words were no sooner spoken when the airlock door that they had worked hard to shut suddenly exploded inwards, showering them with blazing metal fragments. Smoke billowed out from the gaping hole where the shutter had once been.

Mercer tried to see into the smoke, to see his attackers before they saw him, but the ac-rid smoke stung his eyes and made him cough. Dark shapes could be seen moving steadily through the airlock. They were squat, dull grey metal creatures, shaped like elaborately-angled pillars, topped with a dome from which protruded a single eyestalk. Sticking out in front of the creatures, further down their bodies, were two more protuberances, a sucker stick and a weapon.

Every crewmember looked on in absolute horror as the creatures advanced. They all recognised them, all had heard about them since childhood, knew what they were called, and had hoped they would never, ever encounter them.

Daleks.

18

3

Time Corridor

Another jolt shook the TARDIS, sending the Doctor's companions staggering away from the console. Turlough crashed into a wall and slid to the floor. Only the Doctor managed to retain his position at the console.

Tegan scrambled across the floor to assist the stunned Turlough. 'You all right?' she asked him. He nodded groggily.

'I can't free the TARDIS from the time corridor,' the Doctor announced as he continued to operate various controls in mounting desperation.

'Isn't there anything you can do?' demanded Tegan, as she helped Turlough to stand.

'There's too much turbulence,' the Doctor explained. 'Hang on. Things must stabilise soon.'

As if determined to prove him wrong, the TARDIS lurched again, and the Doctor was flung across the room. He recovered his balance and staggered back to check the flight readings. 'We're now travelling within the corridor,' he updated his companions. The turbulence had noticeably subsided.

Turlough examined one of the console computer screens. 'Doctor, we're weaving in time.'

The Doctor ducked down beneath the console, and lifted away one of the pedestal panels. 'Yes, I know,' he replied tersely, withdrawing his toolbox from its storage compart-ment.

Tegan was uncomfortably reminded of a time when she'd been stuck on a small boat in the middle of Sydney Harbour during a storm. The constant buffeting motion of the TARDIS was making her feel almost as ill as she had been then. 'Can't we materialise?'

she suggested hopefully.

The Doctor was too immersed in his work on the console to reply, so Turlough answered for him. 'Not until we're free of the time corridor. We risk break-up.'

Tegan had always been a strong believer in seeking a second opinion if she didn't like the sound of the first one. 'Is that true?' she demanded of the Doctor.

The Time Lord flashed her a reassuring smile. 'Not if I have anything to do with it.'

Completing his modifications, he tested the control he had been working on. A high-pitched whining noise filled the room, and the TARDIS lurched wildly once more. The toolbox toppled over and slid across the floor, spilling delicate instruments in its wake.

The floor eventually returned to the horizontal position. As soon as this latest bout of turbulence had subsided, a doleful deep tolling sound filled the room. This was the

TARDIS cloister bell, the warning mechanism that signalled only the direst emergencies.

Tegan looked up at the ceiling.

‘Oh no!’

The Doctor stood at the console tapping his lips with his index finger, his eyes constantly darting across the various readings displayed before him. Tegan and Turlough 19

watched him expectantly. Their safe extrication from the time corridor depended very much on the Time Lord’s ability to control his ship.

Tegan still felt unwell. ‘What are we waiting for?’ she inquired impatiently.

‘The right moment,’ the Doctor replied, his eyes remaining fixed on the console. After a pause, he glanced up and noticed Tegan’s pained expression. ‘The time stress on the TARDIS varies greatly,’ he explained. ‘I’m waiting for the right moment to break out of the time corridor.’

This was little comfort for the Australian. ‘Can I get to my room?’ she asked. ‘I feel sick.’

‘Too late, Tegan!’ announced the Doctor without malice. The readings had at that moment converged at the optimum point. ‘Hold on!’ He hit a button, and the room suddenly tilted alarmingly, accompanied by a loud protesting noise from the TARDIS engines.

The Doctor and Turlough gripped the console, but Tegan staggered back across the room. Just before she reached the wall, the chamber titled back the other way, at an even steeper angle, and she found herself sliding and falling towards the console.

Turlough reached out an arm and caught her around the waist.

The whole fabric of the room rippled like the surface of a pond. The Doctor spoke, his voice high and distorted. ‘Hold on!’

The noise from the TARDIS engines steadily grew to a deafening roar.

Tegan tried to shout over the top of this maelstrom, but her voice came out thin and reedy. ‘Doctor - I can’t stand much more!’

As if in response to her protest, the Doctor suddenly reached out one hand across the console and slammed down a single button. The TARDIS gave a huge lurch sideways, and the Time Lord’s two companions were once more thrown to the floor like rag dolls. The room stabilised and all was steady and quiet, apart from a peaceful, contented hum from the console.

Tegan stared up at the ceiling for a few moments, hardly daring to hope that the ordeal had come to an end. The Doctor loomed into her field of view.

‘We’re free,’ he announced, with evident relief.

Turlough sat up gingerly. ‘Is it over?’ he inquired.

‘For the moment,’ replied the Doctor omniously, and looked once more at Tegan, who as yet had not moved from her recumbent position. ‘Are you all right?’ he inquired gently.

‘I think so,’ Tegan confirmed, and got to her feet, straightening her dishevelled clothes.

‘Good!’ the Doctor beamed, and dived back under the console.

Turlough examined the console readings, whilst Tegan busied herself collecting the Doctor’s scattered tools and packing them back in their case.

‘Doctor,’ said Turlough suddenly.

Such was the note of concern in Turlough’s voice that the Time Lord went instantly to his companion’s side.

‘Look at our course,’ Turlough advised, jabbing a finger at the computer screen. ‘We’re travelling parallel to the time corridor.’

The Doctor nodded. It was as he’d expected.

Tegan stopped clearing up and joined them. ‘Where are we going?’ she wanted to know.

Turlough consulted the computer. ‘Twentieth Century Earth, it seems.’

Tegan felt a sudden involuntary shiver. Home again.

The central column shuddered to a halt and a single chime issued from the console, indicating that the TARDIS had materialised.

‘Have you calculated where we are?’ Tegan wanted to know.

## 20

‘The instruments are still affected by turbulence, but I think it’s 1984, London,’ the Doctor informed her. ‘Found it!’ he announced suddenly. He operated the door control decisively and pulled his furled panama hat from his pocket as he headed towards the opening doors.

‘Where are you going?’ asked Turlough.

The Doctor hesitated in the doorway and frowned. ‘The time corridor,’ he replied, as if his destination was never in any doubt. ‘I want to find out what all this is about.’

The Time Lord marched out of the console room, leaving Tegan and Turlough to exchange meaningful expressions. They knew from considerable experience of the Doctor’s habitual tendency to become ‘involved’.

The Doctor looked around to get his bearings. The TARDIS had landed on a wharf on the south bank of the River Thames, and the Time Lord knew exactly where he was as soon as he looked up and saw the famous Tower Bridge just upriver.

Even for an intergalactic traveller like the Doctor, the Thames held many associations with his past. He recalled his failed attempt to drown the TARDIS; his quest in a small rowboat with Professor Litefoot for the confluence of the Thames and the Fleet; the Skarasen rising from the waters in the final stage of the Zygon gambit; and an early memory of encountering his deadly nemesis rising from the murky depths of the river in the Twenty-Second Century...

The Doctor’s skin prickled as if he’d been stung by nettles. It was a peculiar nervous reaction he hadn’t felt in quite some time.

He walked across the wharf to get a better look at his surroundings, and saw that it was situated at the end of a street that ran between two large imposing brick warehouses which appeared to have fallen into disuse.

Tegan stepped from the TARDIS and took a moment to acclimatise herself as the Doctor had done. After coming to terms with the destruction of Earth in the far distant future, she was comforted to be back in her own time and place.

‘Such neglect,’ observed the Doctor as Tegan joined him, and indicated the brick edi-fices with his unfurled hat. ‘A hundred years ago this place would have been bustling with activity.’ Such was the conviction in his voice that it was evident that he’d actually witnessed the London docklands of the late nineteenth century.

‘They might be again when we find out who’s operating the time corridor,’ quipped Tegan with her usual pragmatism.

The Doctor frowned. ‘The trouble with you is that you have no imagination,’ he told her. ‘Come on.’ He stuck his hat on his head and walked away.

Turlough emerged, locked the TARDIS door and trailed after his two companions.

‘Just because I can’t get worked up about a load of crumbling brickwork,’ Tegan protested.

The Doctor put a counselling hand on her shoulder as they walked, and pointed up at the building they were approaching, explaining to her in his gently lecturing tone that once, all of London's sea-borne imports had been unloaded at wharves such as this one.

Turlough hung back, experience having taught him that the Doctor's encounters were invariably hostile in nature, and he had no reason to believe that the time corridor operator would be the one to break the pattern.

He stared into the gloomy shadows as they walked between the two warehouses. They were constructed so that the second floor connected above the road, creating a short dark tunnel, and although Turlough would not have admitted it to his companions, he was pro-foundly relieved when they emerged into the daylight without incident.

## 21

The Doctor paused at the intersection of two roads to get his bearings, mentally imposing the time corridor coordinate pattern provided by the TARDIS computers on the land-scape. After a moment's hesitation, he started off down another street. He came to a sudden halt again a mere seconds later, causing Tegan, who had been following hard at his heels, to collide with him.

The Doctor steadied her, then indicated a pair of large wooden doors - unbeknown to them the same doors through which the fugitives from another time had made their escape attempt a day earlier.

'There,' the Time Lord said decisively.

'The time corridor's in there?' Tegan retorted sceptically.

The Doctor was not at all put out by her evident lack of faith in his judgement.

'According to the TARDIS, the point of termination is somewhere in the region of this building. Are you coming?' he inquired, and without waiting for a reply, stepped up to the doors and took hold of one of them by its rusty handle. As he did so, he felt the prickling sensation on his skin again. For a moment he hesitated, unsure whether this was connected to his investigation, and then shrugged it off and pulled the door open a short way.

Tegan stifled a gasp as a grimy hand shot out through the gap and clenched the Doctor's arm in a vice-like grip.

Reacting instantly, the Time Lord reached into the gap, took hold of the arm with his free hand and pulled its owner out through the doorway with a sudden jerk.

The figure that emerged was a short stocky man, clothed in a dirty and torn uniform of a style not recognised by the Doctor or his companions. He staggered slightly, clutching at the Doctor for support.

‘Don’t come in here,’ he cautioned the Time Lord in a conspiratorial manner.

‘Soldiers.’

‘What?’ replied the Doctor sharply, but the man was already sliding to the ground.

The Doctor knelt beside the stranger and swiftly checked the man’s vital signs. ‘He’ll be all right.’

Tegan crouched down and studied the recumbent figure. ‘Look at the way he’s dressed,’ she observed.

The Doctor nodded. ‘Must have come down the time corridor,’ he surmised, and watched intently as the man started to come around.

The man groaned and rose weakly on one elbow. ‘You’ve got to help me,’ he implored the Doctor, his haunted and frightened eyes searching the Doctor’s concerned expression.

The Doctor removed his hat and leaned closer. ‘What happened?’

‘We escaped from the ship...’

‘Using the time corridor?’ ventured the Doctor, and gave Tegan a small triumphant smile at the man’s nod of affirmation.

‘Who are you?’ asked Tegan.

‘Quartermaster Stien,’ came the reply. ‘My friend Galloway was killed... I’m the last one...’ Stien’s voice faltered. ‘I must rest,’ he muttered. ‘I’m hungry. I haven’t eaten since yesterday.’

‘Who’s controlling the time corridor?’ the Doctor persisted.

Stien stared at him, feeling a growing stabbing pain in his mind. ‘I... I don’t know,’ he stammered, and turned away from the Doctor’s probing stare. He focused instead on Tegan. She looked sympathetic. ‘Have you anything to eat?’ he asked hopefully.

Tegan shook her head. ‘Where are you from?’

‘Earth,’ he replied. ‘Not all of us were from the same period, though.’ The pain in his head returned. ‘Are you sure you haven’t got anything to eat?’

‘Relax,’ the Doctor advised him, getting to his feet. He stood back, and motioned Tegan and Turlough to join him. ‘I’m going into the warehouse,’ he announced.

At this, Stien scrambled weakly to his feet. ‘No,’ he objected. ‘I told you, there are soldiers.’

‘Well perhaps they can tell us what’s going on, hmm?’ suggested the Time Lord pointedly. He pulled the door open further and entered the gloomy interior.

Tegan followed, accompanied by the reluctant Stien. Turlough hung back, warily watching the deserted street for any signs of life before following the trio inside. If he had lingered a moment longer, his vigil would have been rewarded, as two figures in the uniforms of British policemen stepped out of a side street. They watched impassively as the warehouse door closed.

Tegan’s eyes gradually adjusted to the gloomy interior. Discarded wooden packing cases were stacked against the walls, and papers and lengths of wood littered the floor.

Here and there, puddles of muddy water had formed where the rain had seeped through the brickwork.

Tegan thought for a moment that she could hear faint muffled voices from somewhere within the building, but dismissed them as the product of her overactive imagination when the Doctor and Turlough showed no signs of having heard anything.

Stien was showing the Doctor to a flight of steps just ahead of them. ‘The time corridor is on the next level,’ he informed them in hushed tones. ‘Be careful.’

The Doctor peered up the stairs, furling his hat in his hands. Without a word, he climbed quickly to the landing, then beckoned the others to join him.

‘I’m Tegan, by the way,’ said the Australian, suddenly realising that there had been no reciprocation of introductions. ‘That’s the Doctor and this is Turlough.’

Stien opened his mouth to reply, but Tegan had already disappeared up the stairs after the Doctor. Turlough gave him a sympathetic smile before following her. Stien sighed, and clutched his stomach as he started to climb.

At the top, the Doctor had opened the door and emerged on to the upper level.

‘Dark, isn’t it?’ quipped Turlough nervously.

The Doctor stowed his furled hat in the breast pocket of his coat. ‘Look around,’ he instructed, and began walking across the large floor, carefully examining the room for signs of anything unusual.

Tegan’s shoe struck something small and hard as she moved off in a different direction.

It clinked, a sound of metal striking metal, as it rolled away. She squatted down to examine her find.

‘I can’t see Galloway’s body,’ muttered Stien. ‘This was the last place I saw him alive.’

The Doctor was about to question Stien further when Tegan called out to him.

‘Look, Doctor!’

The Time Lord joined his companion on the floor, and noticed that she was holding up a couple of shiny metal objects in her hand. ‘Bullets.’

Turlough was exploring the far side of the room, beyond the brick partition. At the sound of Tegan’s discovery, he began to make his way back to join them. Gradually, to his horror, he began to feel as if he were wading through treacle. A red glow formed around his body. He wanted to call out, to alert his companions to his predicament, but he couldn’t speak or move a muscle, and all three were facing away from him. The darkened warehouse interior faded from view, to be replaced by a brilliant whiteness.

The Doctor and Tegan, watched from a short distance by Stien, were completely oblivious to Turlough’s fate. The Time Lord sniffed one of the spent cartridges. ‘Recently fired,’

he observed, detecting the lingering odour of freshly burnt gunpowder.

## 23

‘Hardly alien,’ observed Tegan with a note of relief in her voice.

The Doctor agreed, but didn’t share Tegan’s conviction. ‘But then, why advertise who you are?’ he suggested rhetorically.

Tegan stood up and looked around. ‘Where’s Turlough?’ she said suddenly.

The Doctor scanned the room. ‘Turlough?’ he called.

Tegan walked over to the brick partition and peered through the archway into the adjoining room. ‘Where’s he gone?’ she demanded.

‘He didn’t go through here,’ Stien added helpfully, indicating the door. He had been lingering not far from the doorway the whole time they had been in the room, ready to be the first to escape should the need arise.

‘Turlough!’ shouted the Doctor, a note of concern entering his voice.

Tegan had been wrong about her imagination deceiving her; she had heard voices. They had come from a disused foreman's office, a small room on the far side of the street level of the warehouse, where the small group of soldiers whose arrival Stien had witnessed earlier had set up camp.

Three men in uniform sat at a couple of trestle tables, two of them playing cards while the third made adjustments to a portable radio set. Nearby, in a corner of the room where one brick wall had been partially broken down, a bespectacled woman in her late thirties, dressed in a quilted blue parka and dark trousers, dug in a patch of exposed earth with a trowel. A cluster of strangely-shaped silver cylinders projected from the hard earth floor, and she was clearing the soil away from the nearest of these with the meticulous care of a dedicated archaeologist.

The fifth and final member of the group, dressed in the uniform of a colonel, stood in the doorway, listening intently to a faint sound. 'Sergeant Calder,' he said quietly, turning to the man at the radio set. 'Did you hear that?'

The Sergeant, a red-haired slightly portly man, joined the Colonel in the doorway, a puzzled expression on his face. 'No sir,' he replied.

'I thought I heard voices,' the Colonel frowned.

The Sergeant was about to reply when they both distinctly heard a faint shout from the floor above them. It sounded like someone's name being called.

'Come with me,' the Colonel instructed. Calder grabbed a machine gun and followed his commanding officer.

'Turlough!' called the Doctor again, unaware that his efforts to locate his missing companion had now been heard by others.

He and Stien were searching the adjacent storeroom, and Tegan was checking behind a stack of packing cases. As she moved behind the cases, a quick flash of movement caught her eye, and was instantly relieved to find that it was only a small tabby kitten. It darted away as she approached. Tegan looked up over the cases, trying to follow the kitten's path, and as she did so, saw the door open and caught a glimpse of the uniformed men beyond.

Instinctively, Tegan dropped down behind the wooden crates.

The Doctor and Stien re-entered the room and were confronted by the two soldiers.

'May I help you, gentlemen?' the Colonel inquired in a tone which while polite, made it quite clear that he strongly disapproved of their presence.

The Doctor faced his questioner, and instantly adopted his most disarming smile. 'Ah yes, I'm sorry about this. A friend of mine wandered in here by mistake and we're looking for him.'

The Colonel glanced around the room. ‘I don’t see him,’ he replied sceptically. It was 24

clear that he didn’t believe the Doctor’s explanation.

‘That’s because he’s missing,’ the Time Lord replied, the merest hint of irritation in his voice. He’d never had much patience with the military mind.

Before the Colonel could offer a reply, the bespectacled woman in civilian clothes entered the room. ‘What’s going on, Colonel Archer?’ she demanded.

The Colonel turned. ‘That’s precisely what I’m trying to find out,’ he said, and then turned back to the Doctor. ‘What are you doing here?’ he asked.

The Doctor looked him in the eyes and answered in a firm, level tone. ‘You really wouldn’t believe me if I told you.’

‘Try me,’ Archer insisted.

The Doctor shrugged. ‘I suspect that this building is the point of termination for a time corridor, probably operated by alien beings. It seems likely that my friend has become trapped in it...’ The Time Lord paused to study Archer’s expression, trying to gauge the man’s reaction to what he had said.

‘Time corridors... alien beings... really?’ the Colonel scoffed.

Stien had lingered quietly in the background throughout this exchange. Now he stepped forward to offer his support to the Doctor’s story. ‘It’s true. All we need to prove it is a minute or two more - the entrance to the time corridor is on this level, somewhere.’

The Doctor had not taken his eyes off Archer. ‘Interesting,’ he murmured. ‘You don’t disbelieve us, do you?’

Archer was caught off guard, and flinched away from the Time Lord’s piercing gaze.

‘Of course I disbelieve you. I’ve never heard such nonsense,’ he replied hurriedly.

The Doctor was far from convinced. ‘What have you discovered?’ he demanded.

‘Nothing!’ Archer snapped. ‘Take them away!’ he ordered Sergeant Calder.

Before the burly Sergeant could carry out this instruction, the woman stepped forward.

‘Tell them, Colonel,’ she suggested. ‘They’ve guessed most of it already.’

Archer glared at her, irritated at her intervention. ‘Are you from the press?’ he asked the Doctor.

The Doctor shook his head. ‘I’m investigating for UNIT,’ he told them. ‘I’m their scientific adviser,’ he added in a secretive, confiding manner. The first half of the statement was a lie, but he felt sure that his former colleagues would vouch for him if contacted.

‘Is that some sort of joke?’ Archer demanded.

The Doctor was taken aback. ‘Certainly not,’ he protested.

‘Professor Laird is UNIT’s scientific adviser,’ the Colonel informed him. ‘She is on loan to this team.’

The Doctor immediately directed his attention to Laird.

‘What have you found?’ he asked her, intensely curious.

‘You still haven’t told us who you are,’ the Colonel snapped before Laird could reply.

‘The Doctor,’ he replied. ‘Doctor John Smith.’

‘The Doctor,’ Laird echoed with surprise, clearly aware of what he was talking about.

‘But it’s been years...’ She hesitated. ‘You don’t look anything like the photographs...’ she added suspiciously.

‘If you know who I am, then you should also know that I’ve changed - several times,’

the Doctor persisted.

‘Sergeant, get onto HQ and run a check on this man’s identity,’ Archer instructed.

Calder hurried from the room, and the Colonel turned back to the Doctor. ‘If you are who you say you are, then you will be briefed once you have clearance.’

‘There may not be time,’ said the Doctor with mounting frustration. ‘Tell me what you’ve found! Alien objects?’

## 25

‘Quiet!’ Archer looked worried.

The Doctor smiled reassuringly at Stien. Inwardly, he was hoping that Lethbridge-Stewart had seen fit to update UNIT on his latest regeneration after his meeting with him in his retirement at Brendon School. Thoughts of that encounter renewed his concern for Turlough’s predicament, and it occurred to him that he had not seen Tegan for some minutes. He wondered if both his companions had become trapped in the time corridor.

Sergeant Calder returned with the other two soldiers, who had their rifles slung over their shoulders. ‘There’s heavy static,’ he informed the Colonel. ‘I can’t get through to HQ.’

‘A side effect of the time corridor,’ postulated the Doctor helpfully.

‘Be quiet!’ snapped Archer, frustrated that he had been thwarted in his attempt to either verify or discredit the stranger’s claimed identity.

Behind the wooden crate which served as her hiding place, Tegan had been crouching down, silent and unmoving, listening to the conversation. Her legs had become so stiff with cramp that she was finally forced to attempt to change position as quietly as possible.

Overbalancing on her numbed feet, she toppled forward against a crate, sending it crashing into the next one.

At this, the soldiers were instantly alert, readying their weapons and aiming them at the stack of crates. Archer drew his revolver. ‘Who’s there?’ he demanded.

Tegan rose sheepishly from behind the crates and the Doctor moved defensively towards her, blocking the soldiers’ line of fire.

‘Don’t harm her, please,’ he pleaded. ‘She’s a friend.’ The Doctor raised his hands to defuse the situation, and continued walking towards Tegan.

‘Hello, Doctor,’ she said with an apologetic smile, well aware that her sudden appearance had probably not helped the Doctor’s shaky credibility. Everyone was staring at her, and as her eyes passed over their faces, she saw something else in the shadows behind them.

‘Look!’ she shouted, as a dark shape began to form within a hazy red glow. The group turned as one.

‘What is it?’ Archer asked, realising for the first time that the Doctor might have been telling him the truth from the outset.

The Doctor stared in disbelief as the glow faded to leave the solid, familiar shape in its place. For what seemed like an eternity, he was frozen in time, gripped by a sudden deep dread at the apparition of evil that he’d managed to evade for so long...

The spell broke, perhaps less than a second after Archer’s question, and the Doctor was running, pulling Archer to cover with him behind a concrete pillar. ‘A Dalek!’ he shouted.

‘Take cover!’

Professor Laird and Stien joined Tegan behind her crate, and the two soldiers took up positions behind another pillar.

The Dalek moved forward, gunstick quivering as its mono-optic lens scanned left and right, searching out a target.

‘Exterminate!’

26

4

The Prisoner

‘Fire!’

Even as Mercer gave the order to attack, the lead Dalek unleashed its ray of death con-signing one of the maintenance crew to oblivion.

The crewmembers began firing, but their compact hand lasers were about as effective as peashooters against the reinforced polycarbide battle-armoured shells of their attackers.

Mercer heard someone yelling over the gunfire, and turned to see Styles gesturing frantically. ‘Now! Now!’

The explosives, thought Mercer and turned back to the engineer crouched beside him.

The man was now slumped over the barricade, a tell-tale wisp of smoke rising from his overalls.

Mercer prised the detonator from the dead man’s fingers and jabbed at the buttons. A series of deafening explosions pounded the airlock, and the two lead Daleks, positioned almost directly over the carefully placed charges, erupted in flame.

‘Under attack! Under attack!’ screeched the remaining Daleks. ‘Withdraw! Regroup!

Withdraw! Regroup!’ Without hesitation, they spun around and accelerated back into their ship, leaving their two burning comrades behind.

The Daleks’ casings had cracked and fragmented, and the triumphant station crew looked on as squirming, deformed green bodies with many thrashing vestigial limbs died on their funeral pyres.

The destruction of the Daleks had been observed on the battle cruiser's command bridge.

Lytton turned away from the scanner screen and faced the Supreme Dalek. Unlike the dull gun-metal grey livery of its army, the Supreme Dalek had a gleaming jet black casing with white sensor domes.

'Fools,' Lytton snarled angrily. 'I told you this would happen. They mined the corridor.'

'We do not want excuses,' replied the Supreme. 'The attack must continue.'

Lytton agreed. 'Only this time as I planned,' he stipulated.

The Dalek Commander glided forward. 'You will show more respect for the Supreme Dalek,' it ordered threateningly.

Lytton backed off slightly. 'Your battle tactics won't work,' he continued in a more reasonable tone. 'Their position is too strong.'

'You may proceed,' conceded the Supreme after a moment of computerised considera-tion. 'We shall try your plan; but should you fail, you will be exterminated.'

Lytton turned away, his expression grim. As he called up one of his troopers on the communications console, he pondered his chances of survival. As long as he continued to serve the Daleks without error, he might live - but what would happen once his usefulness to them was at an end?

## 27

'Trooper Vasil,' Lytton snapped into his own comlink. 'Take a canister of QX345 and release it in the airlock.'

That was one way in which he was useful to the Daleks, thought Lytton. QX345 was a devastatingly effective trademark of the Charnel League; biological warfare at its most effective - a gaseous compound hungry for humanoid flesh.

Lytton allowed himself a small, private smile. It amused him to think that he would succeed where the Daleks had failed. When it came to warfare, Lytton was a true professional.

He was a Charnel warrior.

The fires had guttered and died, leaving the burnt-out shells of two Daleks. For a few tension-loaded minutes, the approach to the airlock remained empty. The crew had become restless with waiting, no-one more so than Styles.

‘How long before they try again?’ she demanded of Mercer.

Mercer shrugged. ‘Soon,’ he guessed.

‘But can’t we board - take the fight to them,’ Styles protested, and started to climb over the barricade.

Mercer dived forward and pulled her back. ‘I think not,’ he replied, and was disconcerted to catch a hint of battle-lust in her expression. He’d seen that look once before, on the faces of the front line of a crowd of rioters on Earth.

A sudden movement behind the gutted Dalek shells drew Mercer’s attention back to the airlock, just as a masked trooper in black battledress appeared and tossed something towards them.

‘Fire!’ Mercer yelled.

Even as the laser beams criss-crossed across the barricade, the trooper was retreating back into the Dalek ship, and had disappeared from view before their weapons could find a target. The projectile, a grey metal canister, rolled to a stop against the barricade and immediately began hissing furiously.

Mercer caught the first whiff of a sickly sweet scent, and made the connection; some form of deadly gas. ‘Masks down!’ he ordered, fumbling for his own.

Styles, Zena and Doran all pulled their masks over their faces, but the remaining crewmembers were without protection. Almost immediately they started coughing and splutter-ing. Styles started to go to their aid, but Mercer pulled her back. He needed people to fire weapons, not tend the dying. Two Daleks appeared in the airlock and ploughed forward, shunting aside the burnt-out remains of their fellows and firing as they approached.

‘Come on while there’s still time!’ shouted Mercer, and weapon blazing, led the way back into the depths of the station. Styles, Doran and Zena sprinted away from the carnage, leaving the Daleks to fire on the dead and dying.

More Daleks swarmed through the airlock, accompanied by human troopers in masks and battledress. All ignored the corpses of the station crew, which now that the gas had taken effect, were horrific to behold. QX345, the Charnel weapon, had triggered the rapid decomposition of their flesh, reducing the bodies in a matter of seconds to unrecognisable lumpy messes of human carrion.

The station's bridge crew had been spared the horror of witnessing the effects of the lethal gas. A stray shot from a Dalek weapon had taken out Airlock Three's surveillance camera.

Osborn's right index finger hovered over the destruct switch for the prison chamber, a look of troubled indecision on her face. At the back of her mind was the faint hope that they just might be able to use the prisoner as a hostage to guarantee their safety. If she destroyed him, that chance was lost. She looked up from her silent vigil as a speaker crack-28

led, and a voice broke through over the static.

'This is Mercer. We're finished. It's everyone for themselves.'

Everyone on the bridge stopped and listened. As Mercer's announcement ended, the group began murmuring amongst themselves in anxious, shocked tones. Phin, who had been organising the station's few survivors who had made it to the bridge, broke away from the group and joined Osborn at the console.'

The speaker crackled again, and Mercer's voice came through once more. 'Osborn - do as I instructed - now!' The communications link fell silent. Even the static had gone.

Immediately, Osborn punched the destruct button. A red light winked at her from just above the control, and she groaned. 'Oh, no! It's not working!' Osborn hit another control, and grabbed Mercer's security card as it ejected.

'Come with me,' she ordered Phin, and pausing only to collect a breathing mask and a laser, she made for the lift at a run. Phin picked up a tool kit and followed her.

In the few tense moments of their descent in the lift, Osborn outlined her plan to Phin.

If the prisoner could not be destroyed by remote control, then they would have to activate the destruct mechanism manually.

And if that didn't work - Osborn brandished her hand laser to show that there were cruder, but more effective, methods of execution.

As soon as the lift doors opened, they were running. They were both well aware that their flight could deliver them straight into the enemy's line of fire, but they had already resigned themselves to death. The important thing now was to ensure that the Daleks did not get what they had come for.

Mere seconds after they ran out of sight of the lift entrance, a pair of Daleks glided up to the open doors and without hesitation filed aboard. The doors hissed shut and the lift began ascending through the hub of the station to the bridge.

Commander Gustave Lytton watched on his scanner as the lift doors slid back and the startled survivors on the bridge turned to face their deaths from the point of view of the Daleks.

He felt a small yet satisfying thrill as the five men and women were exterminated in little more than the blink of an eye. Such clean, uncomplicated killing, and yet at the same time a tinge of regret that it was so easy, so unsatisfying. An easy prey somehow reduced the feeling of job satisfaction.

Lytton broke from his thoughts at Grogan's approach. 'The bridge has been secured, sir.'

Lytton nodded. 'Good. We must join them.'

As Lytton and Grogan left the chamber, the Dalek Commander was reporting to the Supreme. 'The Doctor has been detained in the warehouse.'

'He must be brought to our ship at once,' the Supreme Dalek instructed.

'I obey.'

Osborn was the first to reach the door of the prison chamber. She swiped Mercer's security card through a reader and punched in a code on a numerical keypad.

The door remained shut.

'Come on, come on!' she yelled, as Phin caught up with her, out of breath.

The door slid hesitatingly open and Osborn dived in through the widening gap.

Inside, she crossed immediately to a freestanding console, threw down her mask and began typing in another code.

Phin studied the curved transparasteel panelled cell, behind which the dark outline of 29

the prisoner could just be seen through the opaque mist of the suspended cryogenic gases.

When Phin had been here before, on infrequent security checks, he had sometimes wondered what it would be like to be frozen immobile for nearly a century. He pondered whether there would be any conscious awareness of the passage of time. Despite the urgency of their situation, he found himself returning to these thoughts.

'Does nothing work properly?' Osborn exclaimed, and swore profusely as she kicked the console in frustration.

Phin pushed his musings from his mind and hurried over to his tool kit. Arming himself with a heavy lever, he attempted to force open the top of the console.

‘Try here,’ Osborn suggested, indicating an edge of the control panel which already appeared to be loose. She tried prising it off herself, and then stopped, sniffing the air.

‘What’s that smell?’ she asked.

Phin glanced at the cryogenic chamber in the centre of the room. ‘Well it can’t be the prisoner,’ he observed, and applied his weight to the lever. The console security dome flew off and crashed to the floor.

Beneath, nestled among an array of buttons and lights, was a large slide-lever handle.

Osborn immediately pulled down. Several red lights lit up on the panel.

‘Right, explosive charges primed,’ she confirmed, but Phin was no longer listening. He was staring into the cryogenic cell again.

Osborn found that the smell she had detected earlier was even stronger now. Its cloying sickly sweetness made her feel nauseous. ‘What is that smell?’ she repeated.

‘I... I feel ill...’ stammered Phin, and turned towards Osborn. To her horror, she saw that flesh was literally melting off his face, and several of his fingers had dissolved as if they were made of hot wax.

‘Keep back!’ she warned, as he stumbled blindly towards her, the stumps of his hands held out in a pleading gesture. Osborn drew her laser.

‘Help me!’

‘Stay away!’

Phin raised the remains of his hands to his now barely recognisable face. ‘What’s happening to me?’ he muttered gutturally, his lips liquefying as he spoke.

Osborn grabbed her face-mask from where she had dropped it and pulled it down over her head.

‘Please help me!’ Phin implored.

Osborn aimed her laser at him and closed her eyes so that she wouldn’t have to see what happened next.

The weapon fired, and when she opened her eyes, the disfigured remains of her crew-mate lay crumpled on the floor. ‘I’m sorry,’ she whispered, and turned back to the console.

She inserted Mercer’s card and typed in the final security clearance code. The hatch covering the termination button unlocked, and she flipped it open.

The door slid open behind her, and Osborn reacted instantly, spinning around with her gun raised.

Five troopers dressed in battle armour and masks stood in the entrance. Osborn fired at them, and the nearest one fell. Another stepped forward, raised his weapon and blasted her down. She screamed as the close-range blast sent her hurtling across the room. She was dead before she crashed against the far wall.

The troopers entered; two of them concentrated on removing the bodies while another examined the console, and the fourth, Osborn's killer, went over to the cryogenic chamber.

Lytton gazed through his mask and the shield, attempting as Phin had done before him to make out the features of the prisoner incarcerated within. This was what he had come 30

for. Rescuing the prisoner was his mission.

'Disarmed,' reported Grogan, the trooper at the console. He studied readings on a wrist monitor and then raised his mask. 'The QX345 has dispersed.'

'Good,' replied Lytton. 'Release Davros.'

Grogan pressed a carefully selected button on the console and the transparent shield rose up into the ceiling, releasing billowing clouds of freezing white vapour. Lytton stepped back and waited while the gases thinned enough for the features of the prisoner to be seen clearly.

In a unit closely resembling the sensor dome-studded base of a Dalek, a one-armed emaciated man clad in a black tunic sat motionless against a back support. The withered and cracked skin was stretched tightly over a hairless skull festooned with wires and a metal framework. The eye sockets were dark, wrinkled scar tissue; a single artificial lens mounted in the creature's forehead replaced the absent eyes.

The progenitor of evil had been released.

31

5

An Old Enemy

The Dalek advanced cautiously through the warehouse, its sensors analysing the combat zone and feeding the data through to its battle computer. The barrage of small projectiles on its casing was given particular attention; moments later the warrior received a report on the probability of damage under sustained fire. The targets had to be eliminated. The warrior shunted power to its weapon arm and spat death.

One of Archer's men screamed and collapsed in a blinding pulse of intense white light accompanied by a shrill screech from the blaster bolt.

Professor Laird looked on in fascinated horror from behind a packing crate. 'Where has it come from?' she wanted to know.

Stien and Tegan were crouched next to her. 'The time corridor,' answered Stien with certain conviction.

Tegan stared at him, momentarily glimpsing something else more self-assured and possibly dangerous behind the stranger's cowardly exterior. 'From the ship you were on?'

Stien shuddered, the facade of fear returning to his features. 'Must be,' he stammered defensively.

Fragments from a concrete pillar whistled close overhead, and the trio ducked closer to the floor.

'What does it want?' Laird asked of no one in particular.

'I hope we never find out,' replied Tegan frankly, and for the umpteenth time in her life prayed that the Doctor would do something to rescue them. She peeked out from behind the crate, hoping to catch sight of the Time Lord.

The Doctor had joined Colonel Archer behind an uncomfortably narrow concrete pillar when the firing had started. Now he ventured out to get a good look at his adversary.

The Dalek and the Time Lord saw each other at precisely the same moment. The warrior scanned the humanoid and recognised the characteristic body-print of a Gallifreyan. A message was immediately broadcast on a priority one signal to the central command net on the Dalek ship.

Ka Faraq Gatri sighted: confirmation required.

The Doctor ducked back under cover as a blaster bolt screamed past his ear. It was time for action. 'Aim for the eyepiece!' he shouted above the noise of the gunfire. 'The stalk at the top of the dome.'

Sergeant Calder signalled his understanding from the cover of a neighbouring pillar, and raised the aim of his machine pistol. A volley of bullets raked across the Dalek's head, and its entire eyestalk assembly shattered under the intense impact.

The Dalek immediately ceased firing and began to weave randomly in small circles.

32

'My vision is impaired! I cannot see!' it wailed in apparent distress, over and over again.

Breaking suddenly from cover, the Doctor sprinted towards the Dalek. Taking care to avoid the wildly flailing weapon and sucker appendages, he grabbed hold of the creature and called back to the others. 'Quickly, hold it down!'

Everyone rushed forward and surrounded the Dalek, grabbing hold of its casing as the Doctor had done.

Within its life support chamber, the Dalek mutant thrashed about as it sensed the alien creatures moving in, touching its shell. The battle computer analysed the available options and suggested self-termination. The explosion would destroy the humanoids as well.

Almost immediately the proposal was overrode by a command signal from the Dalek Supreme, bringing positive confirmation of the enemy's identity as Ka Faraq Gatri - the bringer of darkness. Do not destroy, the Supreme instructed. Survival at all costs. The battle computer compensated and implemented another strategy. Power reserves were shunted to the life support chamber shielding and non-essential systems were rapidly disengaged...

For a moment the Dalek remained still, and the group began to relax their grip on its casing. Immediately, the Dalek jerked violently, throwing most of the clinging bodies away from it. A short burst of blaster fire spurted from the gunstick, deliberately aimed far too low. A sizeable chunk of floor disintegrated into small fragments flying in all directions.

Tegan cried out as a piece of debris glanced off her right temple at high speed. She collapsed, and Laird rushed to her aid.

The Doctor glanced in her direction, momentarily torn between his concern for Tegan and the urgent need to immobilise the Dalek. Under the Doctor's direction, the group soldiers regained their grip on the creature and heaved it slowly towards a pair of loading dock doors.

'Warning, warning!' shrieked the distressed Dalek. 'I cannot see! Emergency!'

‘Open the doors!’ instructed the Doctor, and Calder rushed ahead to comply. A quick burst of gunfire at close range took care of the heavy padlock, and the burly Sergeant easily shouldered the heavy wooden doors open. He teetered on the edge of the precipice, then returned to lend his weight to shifting the Dalek towards the opening.

With one final effort, the Doctor, Stien, Archer and Calder sent the creature hurtling through the loading dock entrance.

In the fraction of a second that it took for the Dalek to cover the distance between the first floor of the warehouse and the street below, the warrior sealed its environment chamber.

Its one driving ambition was to survive and destroy the humans. Then its world blossomed into flame.

While the others looked down jubilantly on the pyre in the street, the Doctor rushed to Tegan’s side and checked her vital signs.

‘She’s all right,’ Laird assured him. He looked up and she caught sight of a bleak look in his eyes; a look that spoke of having seen too much suffering and death.

Laird tore her eyes away from his. ‘We should get her downstairs.’

The Doctor nodded, his features altering to a grateful smile. He leapt up and went over to the soldiers who were still looking down at the smouldering remains of their recent adversary. ‘While you’re doing that...’ he said to Laird, and then turned his attention to the victorious group, ‘I’d like a hand with the debris outside.’ The soldiers heaved the doors shut and then followed the Doctor down the stairs, leaving Laird to tend to Tegan.

33

The Systems Coordinator Dalek glided forward. ‘The Dalek sent to the warehouse has been destroyed.’

The Supreme Dalek swung round suddenly from its position at the main scanner screen.

‘How is that possible?’ it demanded.

The Coordinator called up the Dalek’s transmission signals up to the point of its destruction. In a moment the answer was available. ‘The Doctor was aided by the Earth soldiers,’ it reported.

The Supreme's organic body, lodged deep within its polycarbide casing, quivered with rage at the latest triumph of their ancestral enemy. The tactical computer cut in over boil-ing emotions with the prognosis that the Ka Faraq Gatri stood a good chance of endanger-ing their main objectives. The Supreme Dalek accepted the logic of this conclusion instantly.

'Seal the warehouse terminal of the time corridor,' he instructed the Coordinator.

The Supreme turned back to the scanner screen. The hatred for the Bringer of Darkness burned deeply within the part of the Dalek ruler that was still more flesh than machine.

The Supreme recalled the humiliation of defeat on Spiridon, and its weapon arm twitched as it recalled how close the Supreme had come to personally despatching the hated enemy on that occasion. This time, events would take a different course. 'We will kill the Doctor in due course,' it stated.

Stien gingerly brushed a layer of fine soil off the surface of one of the alien objects.

They were cylinders, about half a metre long, with six thick ridge protrusions running along their length and tapering at the ends. The cylinders were made of a metal with a strangely bluish sheen that Stien found disconcertingly familiar. His head started to throb, so he moved away to join Sergeant Calder, who was absorbed in brewing a pot of tea on a portable gas stove.

'Soon be ready,' Calder assured Laird, who was making Tegan comfortable on an army kit bed. She had treated and bandaged Tegan's forehead, and had covered the sleeping young woman with a blanket.

'We could all do with something a bit stronger,' Laird replied. 'How's your friend up-stairs?'

'He's dead,' Calder replied grimly.

At this moment, the Doctor burst in, followed by Archer. The Time Lord immediately went over and crouched beside Tegan's bed. 'How is she?' he asked Laird quietly, his hands gently yet very skilfully probing his companion's head.

'She's sleeping naturally,' Laird assured him, but could see by his examination that there was nothing she could tell him about Tegan's condition that he probably hadn't already figured out for himself; not to mention a lot that she didn't know herself. Laird felt a sudden compulsion to find out more about this strange young man.

'Tea, sir?' Calder inquired of his commanding officer.

'Thank you,' replied Archer gratefully.

The Doctor stood up, satisfied at last that Tegan was in no danger from her wound, and looked down thoughtfully at the alien objects nestled in the soil. ‘Who discovered these cylinders?’ he inquired.

Archer accepted an enamel mug of steaming hot army tea from Calder and joined the Doctor. ‘Builders converting the warehouses into flats,’ he replied.

‘Thought they were unexploded bombs,’ added the Sergeant helpfully.

‘Have you tried to open one?’ the Doctor wanted to know.



This was Professor Laird’s area of expertise. ‘Haven’t even scratched the casings,’ she informed him.

Archer stared at the Doctor. ‘You think these... Daleks have something to do with this?’

The Time Lord considered this for a moment, and concluded, ‘It would be an enormous coincidence if they didn’t.’

The Time Lord’s response appeared to decide matters for Archer. ‘Try the radio again,’

he instructed Calder.

‘Yes sir.’ The sergeant positioned himself in front of the radio set and attempted to call his headquarters.

Archer discreetly drew the Doctor to one side, out of earshot of the others. ‘What exactly are we facing here, Doctor?’ he asked quietly.

The Doctor took a deep breath. ‘Based on my past encounters with the Daleks, I’d say they’re planning an invasion attempt using this warehouse as their point of arrival.’

The colour visibly drained from Archer’s face as the implication of the Doctor’s words sunk in. ‘How long have we got, in your opinion?’

The Time Lord shrugged apologetically. ‘It’s impossible to say without more to go on.’

Above them, on the first floor of the warehouse, Private Mellor sat on a tea chest guarding the remains of the Dalek which had been stacked against a wall. He stubbed out the butt of his cigarette and got up to stretch his legs.

After a few moments of pacing up and down, he returned to the crate, failing to notice as something stirred ever so slightly under a large fragment of Dalek casing...

'Zero Three to HQ... Zero Three to HQ...' Calder's attempts to contact headquarters were meeting with a wall of static.

'Keep trying,' encouraged Archer.

The Doctor had returned to Tegan's side. 'You must get reinforcements,' he insisted.

'Zero Three to HQ,' Calder tried again, and was answered with the same noisy crackle.

'I'll have to find a telephone,' Archer concluded.

'I'll go,' Laird volunteered. 'You're needed here.'

Archer shook his head. 'This is more than a military matter now. I'll have to speak to the Ministry of Defence. We'll need a massive troop involvement.' He picked up his cap and made to leave as Calder once again tried to make contact.

The Doctor followed Archer from the camp. 'I'll come with you,' the Time Lord suggested.

Archer shook his head. 'You're the only one who knows about fighting Daleks.' He donned his cap and then undid his gun belt and passed his holstered service revolver to the Doctor. 'Your duty's here.'

Archer turned and walked away towards the warehouse exit, leaving the Doctor holding his gun. The Time Lord turned the weapon over carefully in his hands, an expression of distaste on his features, and then went back into the camp.

Private Mellor pulled out another cigarette and was about to light it when he heard the scrape of a piece of metal shifting. He looked down at the floor and his eyes widened, the cigarette dropping from his hands as he saw what was advancing towards him...

When the Doctor returned to the camp, gingerly holding Archer's holstered revolver between thumb and forefinger, Tegan was awake and sitting up.

'Here, take these,' urged Laird, handing her a mug of water and some aspirin. 'It'll help your head.' Tegan accepted them gratefully.

35

The Doctor appeared to reach a decision. 'I won't be long,' he said abruptly, handing Archer's gun to Calder. 'I must get back to my ship.'

Stien had been sitting quietly in one corner for some minutes. Now he looked up suddenly at the Doctor's words.

'Sir?' asked Calder uncertainly.

'I must find Turlough,' the Doctor elaborated quickly, turning to leave.

'I understand how you feel, sir,' said Calder patiently, 'but I must ask you to wait until the Colonel returns.'

'No, no. There isn't time. Turlough's on board the Dalek ship.'

At this, Stien leapt to his feet, as if stung.

Calder moved to block the Doctor's exit. 'I'm sure the Colonel won't be long,' he said reasonably.

'Let him go,' insisted a voice behind Calder.

The Sergeant turned to Stien and shrugged helplessly. 'I can't.'

Any further debate was interrupted by an horrendous scream. It had come from the level above them.

The Doctor was the first to react. Before the scream had even died away, he had snatched Archer's gun from Calder's unresisting grip and was out of the camp, making for the stairs.

Stien hurried out, followed by Calder, who grabbed his rifle as he left.

By the time they caught up with the Time Lord he was kneeling beside the semi-conscious form of Private Mellor, examining an angry red weal on the side of the man's neck.

'He's alive,' the Doctor told them. He stood, taking the gun out of its holster and slipping off the safety catch. 'All right,' he said at length. 'Be careful.'

'I was terrified it was a Dalek,' Stien confessed, stuttering through evident fear.

'It was,' replied the Doctor. 'Well, at least the remains of one.'

Calder crouched beside Mellor and helped him to sit up. 'He's still alive,' he assured the Doctor and Stien helpfully, feeling a little out of his depth. He wished the Colonel would return and sort things out.

'We'll have to find it,' the Doctor said grimly, 'before it tries to kill again.' He picked up a straight length of metal tubing and began using it to carefully move aside rubbish and packing materials in search of the Kaled mutant - the organic part of a Dalek. Archer's revolver was held at the ready in his other hand...

‘This is a waste of time,’ stated Stien, who was nonetheless lifting aside a packing crate with extreme care and trepidation. ‘The mutant could have escaped using the time corridor.’

The Doctor fixed him with a hard stare. ‘True,’ he agreed. ‘So why are you being so cautious in your search?’

‘Well we don’t know for certain,’ Stien muttered.

‘Precisely!’ replied the Doctor. ‘That’s why we’re searching the warehouse.’

Calder came across to join them. ‘What does it look like?’ he inquired curiously.

‘Oh, you won’t mistake it,’ the Time Lord assured him dryly. He recalled his own close encounter with the Kaled mutant killer instinct, long ago in the Dalek incubation chambers on Skaro. ‘The moment you find it, it will try to kill you.’

Calder swallowed, and nervously figured his own throat.

The Doctor turned away to resume the search.

Unnoticed by any of them, something stirred beneath a canvas sheet...

## 36

Colonel Archer had located a telephone box relatively easily, situated just one block away from the warehouse. He strode up to the welcoming red box and once inside, immediately picked up the receiver and dialled for the operator.

It was only when he lifted the receiver to his ear a moment later that he realised the line was dead.

Archer jiggled the cradle a couple of times, and then spied the source of the fault; the cord from the telephone to the receiver had been sliced clean through. With a groan of frustration, he replaced the useless receiver on the cradle and stepped back out into the road. Two policemen stood side by side, observing impassively him from a short distance down the street.

Archer smiled with relief as he noticed that they each had a radio clipped to their lapel.

He hurried up to them.

‘Gentlemen, you’ve saved my life,’ he beamed. ‘I’m Colonel Archer, Bomb Disposal Squad.’ He flashed his identification card, and was a little perturbed to notice that neither officer even looked at it.

‘I need to make an urgent call,’ he continued after a pause. ‘May I use your radio?’

To Archer’s puzzlement, the policemen didn’t react. It was as if he had been talking to a pair of waxwork dummies. They continued to stand rigidly at attention, their hands clasped behind their backs.

‘Please?’

One of the officers finally reacted. Slowly and painstakingly he unclipped his radio with one hand and passed it to Archer.

‘Thank you,’ the Colonel replied gratefully. He held the radio to his ear, and grew even more puzzled to find it silent. ‘It’s dead,’ he informed them, handing it back. As he did so, it occurred to him that the device was too light-weight to have any innards.

The policeman who had lent it to him did not make any move to take it back. Archer turned to his partner and his eyes widened in complete surprise as this policeman brought his hands out from behind his back; he was holding a large hand gun, fitted with a silencer on the barrel. His expression blank, the policeman pointed the muzzle at Archer’s head.

Colonel David Archer’s last thought was that he was about to die.

‘It isn’t here,’ said Stien pessimistically. ‘We haven’t found the entrance to the time corridor either.’

The Doctor paused in his search. ‘Temporarily disconnected, I would think,’ he replied, and glanced up at the rafters as if expecting to find the creature lurking there.

Nearby, the canvas sheet moved again, and this time Sergeant Calder was looking in the right direction. ‘Doctor!’ he called urgently, and pointed with his gun.

The Doctor and Stien hurried over to join him. ‘What is it?’ Stien inquired nervously.

The Doctor gestured to him to stay back. ‘Ah, nothing,’ he lied. ‘Go on with the search.’

Stien wasn’t convinced, and watched from a safe distance as the Doctor reached out with his length of pipe and gently lifted one edge of the canvas, his revolver at the ready...

Beneath it was a small tabby kitten, the same one that Tegan had spotted in the warehouse earlier. It meowed at them.

‘So much for the conqueror of the universe,’ laughed Calder.

‘I told you it had gone,’ added Stien reproachfully, but the Doctor wasn’t listening. He had noticed that the kitten’s fur had started to bristle. As he watched, its eyes widened and it began to hiss and spit.

The Time Lord had begun to react even before they heard the cry from Private Mellor.

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The soldier had been resting on a crate while they searched, and was now tugging at his throat, his face contorted in sheer agony.

The Doctor grabbed the canvas sheet and dashed over to the stricken Private, throwing a corner of the canvas over the blobby greenish-brown creature at Mellor's neck. He wrenched it away and hurled the sheet in which it was wrapped to the floor.

By the time the others could react, the Doctor was already firing Archer's revolver repeatedly into the writhing lump. Calder opened fire on it with his rifle for good measure.

When the Doctor's weapon was empty and the air was thick with the smell of cordite, they ceased.

For a moment, there was a breathless silence, and then Stien spoke. 'Is it dead?' he gulped fearfully.

'Would you care to take a look?' the Doctor invited, indicating the bullet-ridden lump of shredded canvas.

Calder went over to attend to Mellor. 'How is he?' the Time Lord inquired, joining them.

'It's more shock than physical,' the Sergeant reported, and then spoke to Mellor, whose whole body was shivering. 'Come on lad,' Calder said kindly, 'let's get you downstairs.'

He pulled the man to his feet and supported one of Mellor's arms around his shoulders.

Alerted by the recent sounds of gunfire, Professor Laird came rushing in. 'What happened?' she demanded to know.

'The Dalek wasn't quite dead, I'm afraid,' replied the Doctor, and handed her his gun, clearly glad to be rid of the weapon.

'Give us a hand, will you?' requested Calder, as he helped the semi-conscious Private Mellor towards the stairs.

'Of course,' said Laird, and went over to support Mellor's other arm. Together, they helped him out of the room.

The Doctor looked down at the remains of the Dalek once more and then turned to Stien. ‘We must get back to the TARDIS,’ he said decisively. ‘I have to find the Dalek Ship.’

‘I’m not going back there,’ Stien stated adamantly. ‘They’ll kill me.’

‘I need your help,’ the Doctor insisted.

‘Help?’ echoed Stien sarcastically, attempting to avoid the Doctor’s steely gaze. ‘You don’t know how much of a coward I am,’ he stuttered.

‘Well you can take this opportunity to show me!’ retorted the Time Lord angrily, going to the door. ‘Come along!’

The Doctor emerged from the warehouse and strode purposefully along the street and then up the alleyway to where the TARDIS awaited him on the dock front. Stien hurried along behind, struggling to keep up with the Time Lord’s long strides. As they disappeared into the gloom of the tunnel-like alley, two policemen walked across the street and watched them leave.

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6

Resurrection

The decision to return Davros to cryogenic suspension and incarcerate him aboard a remote station on the rim of the Solar System had many opponents who argued that this was an invitation to the Daleks to attack. They would be proven right, but the attack would not come for almost a century.

The Daleks would have undoubtedly have moved sooner to liberate their creator were it not for the Movellans, who soon after Davros’s imprisonment, came up with the solution to the stalemate. Disaster struck the Daleks on a scale unmatched in any other period of their recorded history.

The Children of Davros, a Short History

of the Dalek Race, Vol XIX

by Njeri Ngugi (4065)

‘...Very still...’

The words filtered through like droplets falling on the surface of a perfectly still body of water. The system start-up sequence had initiated.

‘...Is he...’

Davros stirred from a brooding, introspective dream and began feeding priority commands to his computer net. It was imperative that vision be established at once.

‘...dead...?’

His optic circuits came on line, and the suffocating darkness that had been his constant companion for so long was replaced by a blurry, indefinable image from the electronic eye in the centre of his forehead. Davros attempted to move his hand.

Another voice spoke from the haze. ‘I think not.’ It was human, with tones indicating a hint of satisfaction. Davros ran a vocal recognition pattern. His systems were slow to comply through disuse. A whole second later the report was negative.

It wasn’t the Doctor. Davros had almost expected his hated adversary to be present at his resurrection. His speech circuits came on line before his vision had completely cleared.

‘Who are you?’ he rasped in a voice that hadn’t been used in nearly a century.

Vision finally came on-line: a tall dark-haired man in battle armour was looking down on him.

‘Commander Lytton,’ he replied.

Davros’s sensors informed him that the breast plate, helmet and blaster weapon were all of Dalek manufacture. So he had been rescued; and not before time.

‘Commander?’ Davros echoed distastefully. ‘My Daleks do not need troops.’

‘You would still be a prisoner, or dead - as the case may be - if it weren’t for my men,’

Lytton informed the Dalek creator.

‘You speak as though my Daleks are no longer capable of war,’ Davros observed suspiciously.

Lytton appeared to choose his next words carefully. ‘A lot has happened during your imprisonment.’ He moved away to join a second trooper.

‘The war with the Movellans is over?’ Davros inquired.

‘Yes,’ Lytton confirmed, ‘although casualties were very high.’

‘It is to be expected,’ Davros agreed.

Lytton shook his head. ‘I’m talking about Dalek casualties.’

For one long tense moment Davros remained silent. ‘Dalek casualties?’ he said at last.

‘They lost, Davros,’ Lytton stated bluntly. ‘They were totally defeated.’

Lytton’s words appeared to send Davros into shock. The part of him that was barely more man than machine thrashed about in its life support chair in what appeared to be uncontrollable spasms.

There was little doubt in Lytton’s mind that if Davros died his own life would also be forfeit. He moved closer, and was relieved to see the Dalek creator recover his composure.

‘Are you all right?’ he inquired.

‘There are malfunctions in my life support system,’ replied Davros stiffly. ‘I require an engineer.’

‘We must board the Dalek ship.’

‘I must remain close to the cryogenic chamber,’ Davros objected. ‘It may be necessary for me to be refrozen.’

Lytton sighed inwardly. ‘There is a time factor,’ he explained patiently. ‘The space station transmitted a distress call.’

‘It will take days for a task force to arrive,’ said Davros dismissively.

Lytton shook his head, struggling to conceal his irritation at the Dalek creator’s obstinate attitude. ‘Not if the signal has been intercepted by a patrol ship,’ he reasoned.

With some apparent considerable difficulty, Davros swung his chair round so that he was closer to Lytton. His one hand shook with uncontrollable rage and he shouted, ‘Then you must shoot it down! I cannot be moved!’

The Supreme Dalek observed this scene on the globe-shaped scanner. ‘Order an engineer to attend Davros,’ it directed.

‘We should leave at once,’ the Systems Coordinator responded.

‘Without Davros we have no future,’ the Supreme stated bluntly. ‘He must be made to believe that we serve him.’

Davros sat silent and motionless in his chair while an engineer, a tall gangly man with slicked-back black hair called Kiston, conducted repairs inside an inspection hatch at the side of Davros’s chair.

Lytton was beginning to feel a little unnerved by Davros’s silence when the Dalek creator suddenly spoke.

‘Tell me about the Dalek defeat,’ Davros requested calmly.

‘You already know most of it,’ began Lytton obligingly. ‘The Daleks and the Movellans were locked in an impasse. Each time their respective fleets attempted some stratagem it was instantly anticipated and countered by their opponent’s battle computers.’

‘Two totally logical war machines unable to out-think the other,’ mused Davros.

‘Fascinating. If only I’d been there!’

‘But then the Movellans found the answer,’ Lytton continued, hesitating when Davros



gave a sudden and involuntary jerk.

‘Sorry sir,’ apologised Kiston, and hastily replaced a dislodged cable in its socket within the life support unit.

‘Quickly,’ urged Davros. ‘Tell me.’

‘The Movellans developed a virus which exclusively attacked the Daleks,’ Lytton went on. ‘The fleet was destroyed. Those who survived went to separate parts of the Universe to avoid the risk of further infection and to work on a cure.’

‘Have they succeeded?’

‘Not yet,’ Lytton admitted.

‘So, they have returned to their creator,’ Davros murmured. ‘Like an errant child, they have come home once more.’ A note of fanaticism had crept into the Dalek creator’s voice and he was beginning to rant. ‘But this time they will not abuse me. This time I

shall take my rightful place as their supreme being. And under my control the Daleks shall once more become triumphant!'

Lytton turned away, ignoring this tirade. He began to wonder why the Daleks were bothering with their apparently insane creator. When Davros was silent once more, he turned back to find Kiston wheeling Davros out of the cryogenic chamber area of the room.

'Will you be able to find an antidote,' Lytton asked, following them across the room.

'Of course,' Davros stated arrogantly.

'A lot of research has already been done,' Lytton cautioned him.

'I am Davros. The Daleks are my creation.' Davros appeared to considered various solutions to the problem for a moment, and then continued. 'If necessary I shall genetically re-engineer them.' The crippled Kaled scientist attempted rather unsuccessfully to peer down at Kiston, once more working on his chair. 'Have you finished?' he inquired.

'Almost, sir.'

Davros nodded, and looked up again. 'I shall need a laboratory.'

'There is one already prepared for you,' Lytton informed him.

'I will work here on the station,' Davros stated.

'I've explained,' retorted Lytton, again losing patience. 'There isn't time.'

'I cannot risk an accident. If the virus were to escape on board the Dalek ship...'

Lytton cut across Davros's argument. 'Every precaution has been taken,' he insisted.

'I work here!' shouted Davros petulantly, 'or not at all.'

Lytton sighed. 'I'll see what can be arranged,' he conceded, and left the room.

'Hurry,' Davros urged Kiston, once they were alone. 'There is much work to be done.'

'I've finished sir,' Kiston replied.

'Close the panel,' Davros instructed.

Kiston locked the panel on the side of Davros's chair back into place. He began packing his tool kit.

Davros discreetly flicked a switch on his chair console and a small hatch opened in the control panel, revealing a sinister-looking black device consisting of a large handgrip and a tapering thin needle-like probe. Davros grasped the device, and moved it until the needle tip was suspended just above the skin of Kiston's exposed neck.

Outside in the corridor, Lytton was talking into his helmet com-link.

The Supreme Dalek's voice sounded in his ears. 'I order you to obey Davros,' said the voice.

'And what happens when the task force arrives from Earth?' Lytton wanted to know.

'We shall be gone,' the Supreme Dalek explained. 'I have a plan that will force Davros


to leave of his own free will. Until then you must supply him with everything he demands.

Allow him access to the space station's laboratory.'

Any reply Lytton might have given to this instruction went unsaid as he was suddenly interrupted by a scream from the cell room.

Davros replaced the device in its socket in his console and the hatch cover closed automatically.

'Obey my will,' said Davros softly.

Kiston stood rigidly to attention, facing Davros. His eyes were blank and empty. 'As...

you... command...' he replied tonelessly.

The door slid open and Lytton entered, pulling off his helmet. 'What happened?' he demanded.

'A small accident,' replied Davros dismissively.

Lytton turned to Kiston and was disconcerted by the engineer's zombie-like expression.

'Are you all right?'

Kiston appeared to wake suddenly, as if from a trance. He relaxed slightly and gave Lytton a slight, reassuring smile. 'I caught my hand, it's nothing sir,' he explained.

Lytton was far from convinced, but said nothing as Kiston packed away his tool kit and Davros began testing his newly-repaired motive systems, gliding back and forth across the floor of the prison cell.

His chair came to a halt in front of the cryogenic chamber. 'Ninety years I was frozen in that,' Davros snarled suddenly. 'Ninety years of mind-numbing boredom.'

Lytton was shocked. 'You were conscious?' he asked incredulously.

‘For every second,’ Davros confirmed. ‘The creatures of Earth have no stomach for ju-dicial murder. They prefer to leave you to slowly rot and die... They call it being humane,’

he added bitterly, favouring the last word with particular distaste.

‘Then you must be equally humane in your revenge,’ suggested Kiston with uncharacteristic coldness.

‘It is a planet I shall destroy at my leisure,’ Davros confirmed. The part of his brain that was a mass of micro-chips fed a carefully constructed plan to him on a single mental command.

The plan had been carefully and meticulously worked out over the past ninety years from information provided by the computer sphere the Daleks had given him to study back on Skaro shortly before he was abducted and frozen into cryogenic suspension by that being known as the Doctor. He was the number one priority in Davros’s plans.

Davros turned to face Lytton. ‘But first I must deal with a meddling Time Lord,’ he stated.

Lytton nodded, seeming to understand perfectly the meaning behind Davros’s words.

‘That has been anticipated,’ he confirmed.

Davros reacted with visible surprise. ‘You have the Doctor?’ he inquired. The Dalek computer sphere had provided him with all that had happened in the millennia that he had been entombed on Skaro. He now knew that the Doctor was a Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey who often interfered in Dalek plans, and he also knew that the Doctor was notori-ously difficult to either kill or detain.

‘His capture is imminent,’ Lytton assured him.

‘Excellent,’ Davros responded. ‘Once I have drained his mind of all knowledge he shall then die slowly and painfully. He has interfered for the last time!’



7

The Hunted

As soon as Turlough materialised in the empty white chamber, he realised that he had acci-dentally stumbled into the time corridor. One of the four blank walls slid upwards, and he stepped cautiously out into a larger area connecting several corridors.

After finding each of the corridors deserted, he concluded that his best course of action was to try to return using the time corridor. It was then that he realised that the shutter had slid shut, cutting off his escape route.

Fighting back a rising feeling of panic, he spied a small raised dome on the wall beside the shutter. Dotted across the hemisphere were a number of recessed buttons, but the controls stubbornly refused to respond to his touch.

'Oh no, I'm a fool!' Turlough muttered despairingly, and reluctantly set off down a corridor in search of an alternative means of escape.

Four figures wearing face masks moved quietly and hesitantly in single file along a dimly lit narrow passageway.

Their leader reached the end of the passage, and peered warily out into the wider connecting corridor, his hand laser at the ready.

'Where precisely are we going?' an angry voice demanded in his ear.

Mercer flinched, and turned on Styles, who had pulled up her face mask and was wiping her perspiring brow.

'Keep your mask down,' Mercer hissed. 'There could still be gas around.'

'So what?' Styles sneered contemptuously. 'I'd rather die quickly than painfully of de-hydration!' She pushed past him and out into the wider passage. 'How much longer are we going to wander around this maze?' she demanded loudly.

Mercer didn't reply immediately. By the faint glow of the few emergency lights still functioning, Styles saw him very hesitantly unclip and raise his mask. He followed her out into the passage. 'Look,' he said, quietly yet forcibly. 'As far as we know there are only the four of us still alive. We can't fight the Daleks alone.' When Styles didn't immediately reply to this he walked a short way down the passage, trying to see further into the gloom.

'Only minutes ago you were prepared to fight to the bitter end,' Styles replied mockingly, as she, Zena and Doran followed him.

'And look where it got me - a dead crew,' retorted Mercer disgustedly.

Styles ran up to him and grabbed his forearm. 'Then don't let it be for nothing,' she pleaded, staring him in the face.

Mercer studied the desperation in her eyes. She appeared to be sincere. ‘What can we do?’ he inquired cautiously.

‘Have you forgotten?’ she asked. ‘This station has a self-destruct system.’

Mercer stared. Had the woman gone completely insane? ‘Operate it? That would be sui-cide,’ he protested, appealing to Zena and Doran for any show of support to his objection, 43

but the terrified expressions behind their face masks told Mercer nothing.

Styles shrugged, and relaxed her grip on his arm. ‘Do you honestly think we stand any chance of getting off this station alive?’ she asked quietly.

Mercer opened his mouth to argue, and saw in that instant that she was right. What chance did they have?

Absolutely none at all.

Turlough crept with considerable trepidation along a corridor. Arriving at a door in a recessed alcove, he attempted to operate the opening mechanism, a duplicate of the one he had tried before.

Stealing a glance down the corridor, he saw to his horror a pair of Daleks approaching.

Turning his attention back to the door he caught sight of a glowing blue square on the opposite side of the doorway. Pressing his hand against it, he then breathed a sigh of relief as the door slid open.

Turlough stumbled through the opening and immediately tried to halt the automatically closing door, but was forced to snatch his fingers away moments before they were crushed in the narrowing gap. Just before it slid shut, he caught a glimpse of the Daleks gliding past in the corridor outside. For a moment he stood still, but the door remained shut and Turlough turned to survey his bolt-hole.

Crumpled on the floor were the badly-scarred bodies of the two men who had succumbed to the gas in the space station airlock. Turlough gagged as a sudden wave of nau-sea hit him, and he grabbed for his hankerchief and pressed it to his nose and mouth to stifle the sickly sweet smell that pervaded the room.

Gingerly, he stepped over the decaying corpses, trying to avoid catching sight of their horribly disfigured features, and worked desperately at the opening mechanism of the door on the opposite side of the small chamber.

The door slid open, and Turlough staggered through as soon as the gap was wide enough to admit him. He stood on the other side coughing into his handkerchief until the horrific sight and smell was cut off.

Once the door was sealed, Turlough quickly recovered, and looked around. He was in a large chamber lined with opaque cubicles, within some of which could be seen the dark shapes of recumbent humanoid bodies.

The centre of the chamber was dominated by a padded bed with a number of controls mounted at one end. Turlough fingered some heavy straps dangling from the side of the couch, and tried to guess at the purpose of the room.

Moving away from this apparatus, he approached one wall of cubicles and put his face up close to one of the frosted panes, trying to make out the features of the figure within, but without success.

What Turlough didn't notice was a camera eye mounted high up in the opposite wall, watching his every move...

On the bridge of the Dalek battle cruiser, the Dalek Supreme observed Turlough on the scanner screen. It analysed the possible options relating to the unexplained presence of the intruder, and concluded, 'He is a companion of the Doctor.'

'He should be destroyed,' the Coordinator replied.

'He would be far better used as bait,' replied the Supreme, recalling Spiridon once more. 'The Doctor is sentimental and emotional. He will come after the boy. This will aid the Dalek plan.' The Supreme opened a link with the Dalek communications net on a general broadcast level. 'Allow the boy to roam freely,' it commanded, transmitting a visual 44

recognition pattern of Turlough from the scanner image. 'He is only to be exterminated should he endanger our cause.'

'I obey,' came back a chorus of computerised signals from every Dalek unit.

Mercer, Styles, Doran and Zena were moving quickly and silently back towards the occupied areas of the station. Their masks were back in place, their wearers mindful of the possibility of gas still lingering closer to the battle areas.

Eventually Mercer signalled a halt near the end of yet another passage. He carefully lifted his mask and tentatively sniffed the air. After listening intently for a few seconds, he spoke. 'We'll rest for a moment,' he announced to the group, and then turned to Styles.

‘How much further?’ he inquired.

Styles looked around, getting her bearings in the murky half-light. In the two years the station had been her home she’d gotten to know every section, but under stress it was sometimes difficult to be sure of even the most familiar things. ‘Not far,’ she replied, and raised her mask. ‘Don’t you crave for silly things?’ she gasped, mopping her brow. ‘I’d give anything for a glass of clear mountain water.’

‘Quiet!’ Mercer hissed urgently, and gestured to the group to duck beside the wall.

‘Down!’

Powerful torch beams played across the end of the darkened corridor and the clatter of heavy boots on the floor panels could be heard growing louder.

Mercer tensed, brandishing his small hand laser. He noticed that the power charge level was dangerously low, and motioned his trio of companions to ready their weapons.

A squad of five troopers appeared at the junction.

‘Fire!’ yelled Mercer.

Fortunately for Mercer and his group, the troopers were no longer expecting to find survivors and their blasters were not at the ready. All five were quickly and efficiently killed with a few short laser blasts from the station crew survivors.

Mercer made to rise and felt a cautioning hand on his shoulder. ‘Careful,’ Styles advised.

He went over and exchanged his depleted hand laser for one of the much larger and more powerful Dalek-built blasters. As he surveyed the bodies a thought occurred to him.

Disguised as the enemy they might gain an advantage. ‘Uniforms!’ he ordered, and they set to the unpleasant task of stripping the corpses of their battledress.

Turlough had been hiding in the chamber with the strange opaque cubicles for so long that he had begun to lose track of time. A sudden buzzing noise startled him, and he whirled around to see that several of the wall panels were sliding back. The bodies behind them started to stir...

At that moment, Turlough lost his nerve, and ran for the exit. The door opened automatically on his approach. Once outside, he darted down the passage, and peered around the end of it to find, to his relief, that he was back in the time corridor terminal reception area. He was about to venture out into the open when he caught sight of something approaching from another direction, and flattened himself back against the wall of the corridor.

Three Daleks glided into the chamber. ‘Activate the exit to the time corridor,’ one of them instructed.

‘We obey!’ chorused its companions, and they began manipulating controls on the walls either side of the shuttered corridor entrance. The heavy shutter slid up and the ma-levolent trio moved inside the terminal area.

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Once the shutter had slid back down, Turlough moved carefully out from hiding and saw four men in the uniforms of Twentieth Century Earth soldiers approaching along the corridor. He was about to call out to them, when he noticed their zombie-like expressions and the Dalek escorting them.

Turlough dashed across the reception area and hid in the approach of another corridor as the soldiers were shepherded in to the chamber. The shutter door opened once more, and the party trooped into the time corridor chamber. The Dalek operated the control on the wall, and the shutter came down.

The Dalek paused by the shutter for a few moments, and then the shutter raised once more to reveal not only the three returning Daleks who had departed earlier, but also, to Turlough’s surprise, the bodies of the soldiers crumpled on the floor. Men in black uniforms appeared and began removing the corpses, and the Dalek who had been waiting outside the time corridor terminal now moved off in the direction of Turlough’s hiding place.

Frantically, Turlough ran off down the passage away from the reception area. The Dalek followed at an even distance.

After running blindly for a short distance through a maze of featureless gleaming white passages, Turlough found himself entering an area that was altogether quite different.

The chamber ahead of him was darkened, with grey walls of a radically different design and signs of a recent battle littered the floor. Two severely damaged Daleks stood motionless just inside the darkened chamber.

Turlough glanced back, unsure of whether to venture further, and saw that the Dalek that had forced him to flee the reception area was coming his way. He darted forward and crouched behind one of the two dead Daleks.

The Dalek glided close by him and through the chamber, which Turlough now noticed from printed lettering on the far wall was called ‘Airlock Three’. From this he deduced correctly that the Dalek ship had locked on to another craft at this point. It was clear that the Daleks were now in control of both vessels.

Turlough watched as a couple of troopers walked into the airlock from the Dalek ship and silently wheeled away one of the shattered Dalek casings. Realising that the pair were likely to return any moment for the second casing, behind which he was hiding, Turlough reluctantly broke cover and dashed towards a corridor entrance leading into the depths of the darkened space station.

It pained him to be moving further away from the time corridor terminal, which was of course his only link back to the Doctor and the TARDIS, but at least the cover of darkness on this other ship offered him a greater chance of survival.

Turlough edged cautiously down darkened passage, his eyes and ears straining to detect any sign of life before it detected him. A long period of relative safety made him slightly less cautious, and he moved ahead more quickly. Turning a corner, he ran straight into a trio of troopers from the Dalek ship, their guns raised.

A fourth trooper emerged behind him and put his arm around Turlough's throat, forcing his head back painfully.

'Kill him,' he ordered.

'Wait!' snapped one of the three. Turlough was surprised to hear a woman's voice when all of the Dalek troopers he previously sighted had been men. Peering closer, he noticed that one of the other figures in trooper uniform was also female.

The first woman spoke again. 'At least question him first.'

Mercer pinned the terrified Turlough up against a wall. Styles looked on while Doran and Zena kept watch.

'Where have the Daleks concentrated their main force?' snapped Mercer.



'I don't know!' insisted Turlough, desperately trying to convince his interrogator of his innocence.

Mercer wasn't convinced. Without warning, he hit Turlough hard in the stomach with the butt of his gun, and Turlough doubled up in pain.

'Don't do that!' objected Styles.

'Hide your eyes if it offends you,' Mercer suggested callously.

'Even a thickhead like you must realise he doesn't know anything,' she retorted.

Mercer glanced sceptically at Turlough, who was still clutching at his abdomen. 'He's not a member of the crew; he must be with the Daleks.'

‘I told you,’ Turlough gasped. ‘I’m from Earth.’

‘Then how did you get here?’ Mercer challenged.

‘The Daleks’ time corridor,’ Turlough insisted.

Mercer turned to Styles. ‘You believe that?’ he inquired sceptically.

Styles was more open-minded. ‘Why not?’ she asked. ‘We know the Daleks are capable of time travel.’

There was a stony silence. ‘So you’re letting him go?’ Mercer asked at last.

‘No,’ replied Styles, ‘but we’re not going to wait here for the Daleks to find us either.’

She took Turlough’s arm. ‘Let’s go!’

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8

Betrayal

Tegan sat bolt upright in the bed just as Sergeant Calder and Professor Laird carried the unconscious Private Mellor into the base camp.

‘The Doctor and Stien have just left,’ Laird explained as they laid Mellor down on a second, hastily erected cot. ‘They’ll be back shortly.’

‘What happened?’ Tegan demanded to know, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

‘A small problem with a Dalek,’ Calder replied.

Tegan watched as Calder and Laird examined a large red rash on the soldier’s neck.

‘He’ll be more comfortable over here,’ she suggested helpfully.

‘Stay where you are,’ Laird instructed gently but firmly.

‘Looks superficial,’ Calder observed hopefully.

‘As long as there isn’t any poison in it,’ Laird added gravely.

Calder frowned sceptically .

‘Well it was caused by an alien,’ Laird reminded him. ‘We don’t know what infection may have entered his blood stream.’

‘Well, the Colonel will be back soon,’ Calder replied, standing up. ‘Then we can get the pair of them to hospital.’ He went over to a sink in the corner and filled the kettle. ‘Anyone want some tea?’ he asked, lighting the primus stove.

‘No thanks,’ replied Laird, going over to inspect the alien objects once more.

‘I’d much rather have the Colonel back,’ added Tegan, still sitting up in bed. ‘How much longer is he going to be?’

Calder turned from his tea-making to give an answer and saw Private Mellor rising from his cot, a ghastly pallor on his features. He walked as if in a trance towards the exit.

‘Hey!’ called Calder. ‘Where are you going lad?’ he inquired, moving to block the soldier’s path. ‘You’re excused duties.’

Mellor suddenly lunged and with a low threatening growl, shoved the burly sergeant off his feet. Calder collapsed on top of Tegan, and Laird rushed to his aid as Mellor shambled out of the camp.

‘Are you all right?’ Laird asked, as Calder got back to his feet and grabbed his rifle.

‘You stay here,’ he advised the two women, and hurried out after Mellor.

‘What’s all that about?’ asked Tegan.

Laird shrugged helplessly. ‘I don’t know,’ she admitted.

Sergeant Calder emerged on to the first floor of the warehouse. ‘Come on lad!’ he called, his voice echoing around the apparently deserted room. ‘Nothing to worry about. It’s only Sergeant Calder!’

He paused, but there was no reply or sign of life. Calder moved to the entrance to an adjoining room. ‘The Colonel’s gone to get an ambulance,’ he called again. ‘... and you’ll be all right.’

A loud, powerful humming noise started up behind him, and he turned to see to his horror a trio of Daleks materialising in the centre of the room in a red haze.

They moved forward as one, chanting ‘Exterminate! Exterminate!’

Calder backed away, frantically firing his rifle.

‘That was gunfire,’ said Tegan suddenly.

‘Quickly, we should get out of here,’ urged Laird, helping her up from the cot.

They were met just outside the door by Colonel Archer, Sergeant Calder and Private Mellor.

‘There’s nothing to worry about,’ Archer informed them coldly, holding up a hand to halt their progress. He then indicated that the women should return to the camp. Tegan and Laird backed away, and the soldiers advanced, slowly and stiffly, like automatons.

Back in the camp Tegan and Laird retreated to the cot, whilst the soldiers clustered near the door.

‘That’s not Colonel Archer,’ whispered Tegan, leaning close. ‘He gave the Doctor his gun, and yet he’s wearing his.’

The man who looked like Colonel Archer moved to stand over them.

‘What are you two whispering about?’ he demanded.

‘I was wondering when the ambulance for Tegan would arrive,’ Laird replied boldly.

‘That is in hand,’ ‘Archer’ replied.

‘And the reinforcements?’ added Tegan, following Laird’s lead.

‘That is a military matter, and therefore confidential,’ ‘Archer’ informed them.

‘I don’t think we should wait for the ambulance,’ Laird ventured, moving to stand up.

‘Archer’ pushed her roughly back down on to the bed. ‘This warehouse is under martial law,’ he stated harshly. ‘Attempt to leave, and I’ll have the pair of you shot!’

The Doctor hurried into the TARDIS console room and moved immediately to the controls. Stien entered more cautiously, and looked around in amazement.

The Time Lord looked up from operating the control that closed the doors and saw his expression. ‘Yes, I know,’ he smiled.

‘What?’ asked Stien uncertainly.

‘It’s bigger inside than out,’ the Doctor elaborated, and turned back to the TARDIS

computer.

‘I think I’m going mad,’ Stien declared. ‘Daleks, time corridors, and now this.’

‘Yes, well don’t worry,’ the Doctor advised with a reassuring smile. ‘It’ll soon be over.’

‘But will I still be sane enough to know?’ Stien asked.

The Doctor was busy tracking the course of the time corridor using the TARDIS sensors. Moments later the console bleeped.

‘That’s it!’ announced the Doctor triumphantly. ‘I’ve located the Dalek ship.’ He looked up and caught sight of Stien’s terrified expression. ‘Now, I could drop you off at the warehouse when I collect Tegan,’ he offered.

Stien didn’t answer immediately; the blinding pain in his head had returned. ‘I’ll...

come with you,’ he said eventually.

‘Good man,’ the Doctor smiled, and set the co-ordinates for the warehouse. The central column began to rise and fall, and the TARDIS dematerialised.

The Doctor stood by to effect rematerialisation almost immediately at the conclusion of what was intended to be nothing more than a short spacial hop, but as the time ship began to align itself with the interior coordinates of the adjacent building, it strayed too close to 49

the operation field of the corridor. A sudden distortion wave swept through the ship’s control systems, throwing the TARDIS off course. The engines began to scream as they struggled to compensate for the stress of being dragged along the temporal rift, and the console room stabiliser field momentarily failed, throwing the Doctor and Stien to the floor.

Information from sensors aimed directly at the time corridor was fed straight to the bridge of the Dalek cruiser. The Systems Coordinator intercepted the flow of new data and relayed it to the Supreme. ‘The Doctor’s TARDIS has been caught in the time corridor,’ it reported.

‘Prepare the Duplicator Room,’ the Supreme responded.

‘I obey.’

Lytton’s com-link buzzed, and he moved away to a corner of the room, replacing his helmet on his head as he did so.

While Lytton communicated with the Dalek Supreme, Davros drummed the tips of his fingers on the console of his chair and devised new and interesting ways to prolong the Doctor's agony before he died.

'I shall inform him at once,' said Lytton finally, and removed his helmet. 'Your laboratory is ready,' he told Davros.

'Good. I will require the assistance of a chemist.'

'Of course,' Lytton agreed.

'And Kiston,' added Davros, indicating the tall taciturn man standing close by his chair.

'He has proven to be a competent mechanical engineer.'

Lytton nodded tolerantly. 'As you wish.'

At this point, the door slid open and a Dalek glided in. Two more stood in the corridor outside.

'Guards?' hissed Davros, flinching visibly at the presence of his creations.

Lytton noticed this reaction, and recalled from his briefing how once the Daleks had tried to exterminate their creator. 'An escort,' he reassured the Dalek creator. 'There are still members of the station's crew at large.' He could see that Davros was far from convinced, and added, 'It's purely a precaution.'

Davros approached the open door. 'I am very difficult to kill,' he stated. 'You should already know that,' he told the Daleks pointedly, but the minions of the Supreme Dalek offered no response.

The creator of the Daleks moved off down the passage, flanked by two of his creations, and followed by the third and Kiston.

Lytton watched them go, then in response to an earlier directive from the Dalek Supreme, hurried off back to the Dalek ship.

He had been told to expect new arrivals...

As soon as the central column juddered to a halt, the Doctor operated the scanner control.

The screen showed that they had arrived in the time corridor reception area, just to one side of the terminal entrance.

'We're on the Dalek ship,' observed Stien, and watched through a haze of pain as the Doctor moved around the console and operated the door opening mechanism. 'Where are you going?' he asked.

‘I must find Turlough,’ the Time Lord replied. ‘You wait here.’

Stien started after the Doctor, but as he approached the exit, the aching pain in his head was suddenly and abruptly washed away. At once he could see and think clearly. He knew 50

what he had to do. With a new determination he strode confidently out of the TARDIS.

Outside, the Doctor was looking around, calling ‘Turlough! Turlough!’

The Time Lord didn’t notice as Stien closed the TARDIS door and went over to a wall locker. Stien pulled out a machine pistol, one of the weapons that Lytton had brought back from Earth earlier.

‘Foolish boy,’ the Doctor muttered, peering off down one of the corridors.

Without warning, a trooper rushed into the chamber, blaster raised, but the Doctor was on his guard, and skilfully wrenched the weapon from the man’s grasp as he passed. The Doctor pushed him to the floor and covered the trooper with the weapon.

‘Quickly!’ he called to Stien, ‘Let’s get out of here.’

‘No, Doctor,’ Stien replied, now standing right beside him.

The Doctor turned, and saw that Stien was pointing the machine gun at him.

‘This is madness!’ insisted the Doctor. ‘The Daleks won’t thank you for capturing me.

They’ll kill you!’

‘I didn’t quite tell you the truth,’ Stien replied, with an unfamiliar cold tone entering his voice. ‘I serve the Daleks. I’m a Dalek agent.’

Before the Time Lord could reply, three Daleks entered the reception area. The ambushed trooper got to his feet and recovered his weapon from the Time Lord’s unresisting grasp as the Daleks moved in, shouting in unison. ‘Exterminate the Doctor! Exterminate!

Exterminate!’

Commander Lytton saved the Doctor from certain death. ‘Wait!’ he ordered, hurrying into the reception area.

One of the trio of Daleks spun round on Lytton. ‘He is an enemy of the Daleks. He must be exterminated!’

‘He must be duplicated first,’ Lytton persisted. ‘Confirm with the Supreme Dalek.’

The Dalek turned away and engaged in an silent exchange with the Supreme. It turned back. ‘Supreme Dalek confirms the order. We must take the prisoner to the Duplication Chamber. Proceed.’

The Doctor glared silently at Lytton and Stien as the three Daleks surrounded him and herded him away down a passage.

‘Impulsive, aren’t they?’ said Stien, once the two men were alone in the chamber.

Lytton agreed. ‘They’d kill anybody - even if they need them.’

‘How much longer before it’s your turn?’ Stien quipped.

Lytton shot him a disparaging look.

The Doctor was ushered through a sliding door by his escort of two Daleks and two troopers. The Time Lord found himself in the same small annexe room that Turlough had discovered some time earlier. On the floor were the dead bodies of the four men from the bomb disposal squad.

The Doctor paused, sickened and horrified by the sight, and also gripped by a sudden fear for the safety of Tegan, whom he’d left in the care of the people who were now dead at his feet.

‘Proceed,’ instructed one of the Daleks, prodding him onwards.

They passed through a second door on the other side of the annexe, and entered the duplicator room. The Doctor studied the console situated at the head of the couch. The two troopers stood at attention by the door, and the two Daleks watched the Time Lord closely.

‘You must not touch the equipment,’ one of the Daleks cautioned.

The Doctor smiled at this, and went up to the one who had spoken.

‘Without a threat of death you’re quite powerless, aren’t you?’

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The two Daleks moved menacingly towards him and the Doctor backed away instinctively.

‘You will obey,’ they chanted.

During this exchange, the door had slid open and Stien had entered, now dressed in Dalek trooper uniform and armed with a laser weapon. ‘It is unwise to provoke the Daleks,’ he advised.

The Doctor turns to him. ‘However you respond it is seen as an act of provocation. I know the Daleks of old; and Davros. I assume he’s about here somewhere...?’ he ventured.

‘You only invite trouble with your questions,’ Stien responded.

‘You mean it can get worse?’

‘Oh yes. The Daleks are very capable of devising painful and undignified ways of dying.’

The Doctor stared at him. ‘But not yet. The Daleks need my brain-waves intact, don’t they?’

A Dalek prodded the Doctor hard in the back with its sucker. ‘You must cooperate. You must lie down,’ it instructed.

The Doctor cried out in pain, and made his way back to the couch. ‘Why isn’t Davros here?’ he asked suddenly. ‘I’d have thought that he would’ve wanted to see this.’

‘He is otherwise detained,’ Stien answered without hesitation.

The Doctor gave him a triumphant smile. ‘So he is here!’

The other Dalek swung menacingly to Stien, who looked worried at having been tricked. The Dalek then turned back to the Doctor. ‘It does not concern you.’

‘What sort of trouble are you in this time?’ the Time Lord queried knowingly, and lay down on the couch.

Stien began to attach small sensor pads to the Doctor’s temples. Thin cables linked these with the console at the head of the couch.

‘I assume my brain waves are destined for Davros,’ the Doctor ventured. ‘You must need his services very badly.’

‘The Daleks are the superior being,’ one of the pair replied. ‘We do not require assistance.’

The Doctor laughed scornfully. ‘Hah! Superior? Took you long enough to ensnare the TARDIS in the time corridor.’

‘It was but one trap,’ the Dalek answered cryptically.

‘But Stien was more effective,’ the Doctor persisted. ‘A living body; not some tin-pot machine...’

Stien appeared to become a little distressed at the Doctor's continued baiting of the Daleks. 'Please, Doctor...'

'Stien is an extension of Dalek technology,' the Dalek stated.

The Doctor was taken aback. 'What?'

'He is a duplicate. He is a product of our genetic engineering.'

The Doctor looked up at Stien, who was now attaching a pad to the Doctor's neck. 'Are you all duplicates?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Interesting. I wonder what happened to the real you? What will you do with my duplicate?' the Doctor inquired curiously.

'That does not concern you,' Stien replied.

'Oh I think it does,' the Doctor disagreed. 'I've grown rather attached to myself.'

'You will remain silent!' one of the Daleks ordered.

The Doctor ignored it and continued to question Stien. 'Have the soldiers from the 52

warehouse been duplicated?'

'Yes.'

'It's very clever. Would you care to tell me how it's done?'

'No.'

'No, I thought not,' the Doctor sighed, and a thought suddenly occurred to him. 'What about Tegan?'

'She is our prisoner,' Stien explained.

'Well she's harmless. You must release her.'

Stien turned to the Daleks, as if seeking their permission.

'Show him,' instructed a Dalek.

Stien picked up a control device from the console and crossed to one of the semi-transparent walls. He pressed a button and a wall panel slid across to reveal two horizontal cubicles; each occupied by a human body wearing white overalls.

The Doctor realised he was looking at Tegan and Turlough; or at least their duplicates.

‘Why?’ he wanted to know.

‘The Doctor without his companions would be rather incongruous,’ Stien explained.

This wasn’t quite what the Doctor had meant by his question. ‘Why are you doing this?’

‘Your duplicates will return to Gallifrey where, at our command, you will assassinate the members of the High Council,’ a Dalek informed him.

‘No!’

Tegan lay in bed watching as the facsimile of Archer silently worked on the radio set. If anything, he appeared to be pulling it apart.

‘Would anyone like some tea?’ Professor Laird inquired, breaking the tense silence.

‘Please,’ Tegan replied.

‘Colonel?’

‘No!’ snapped ‘Archer’ harshly, and went on with his work.

Laird went over to the table and began to make tea. ‘Archer’s’ holstered gun lay next to the tea things, where she had earlier left it. She surreptitiously placed her hand on the holster, but then withdrew it as she felt ‘Archer’s’ eyes on her back. ‘How much longer will the ambulance be?’ she demanded, covering up.

The duplicate of the Colonel got up and came over to her. ‘I don’t know,’ he stated.

‘Tegan has severe concussion,’ Laird lied. ‘It’s vital she receives proper medical attention.’

‘Archer’ crossed to the table and picked up the holstered gun. ‘She will receive medical attention as soon as it is available,’ he said woodenly, and walked off with the gun

‘Thanks very much...’ Tegan muttered sarcastically, watching him depart.

Laird moved over to her. ‘Pity he didn’t want any tea,’ she whispered, taking a syringe loaded with a clear fluid from her parka pocket. ‘He’d have slept for hours.’ She replaced the syringe in her pocket.

Tegan struggled to her feet. ‘We’ve got to get out of here,’ she insisted, and went over to the cylinders, regarding them thoughtfully. ‘Do you think we could free one of these?’

she asked.

Laird smiled. ‘I should think so.’

Tegan started brushing away the soil.

The man who looked like Colonel Archer strode across the lower level of the warehouse, and found ‘Sergeant Calder’ at the foot of the stairs. ‘Archer’ held his holster up.

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‘They know,’ he stated.

‘What do we do?’ ‘Calder’ asked in reply.

‘The Daleks will instruct us,’ ‘Archer’ stated.

Tegan managed to pull a cylinder free of the soil, and holding it up triumphantly, she shook it to remove the last of the dirt.

‘It’s so light,’ she observed, passing it to Laird. ‘What’s it made from?’

Laird shrugged. ‘Who knows? It defied every test I could think of.’ She carried it over to Tegan’s cot and they covered the cylinder up with the blanket, padding the cot up to look as though Tegan was still asleep under the covers.

They stepped back to examine their handiwork.

‘Well?’ Tegan asked sceptically.

‘Not bad,’ Laird replied without conviction.

‘But will it convince?’

‘If you don’t look too hard, perhaps...’

Tegan put her hands on her hips. ‘Truth is, you’d have to be blind to see it isn’t a body.’

Any further debate on the shortcomings of their attempted deception was forestalled by the sound of someone approaching the camp.

‘Quickly!’ hissed Laird urgently.

Tegan whipped away the blanket and Laird picked up the cylinder. Tegan hopped into the cot and Laird gave her the cylinder to hide. She covered herself with the blanket; just as ‘Archer’ marched in.

‘You can stop pretending,’ he announced.

Laird sat down in a chair and turned towards him. ‘I don’t know what you mean,’ she replied innocently.

‘Archer’ held up the holster by way of an explanation. ‘You’re to be transferred to the Dalek ship.’

Laird stood up at this. ‘Tegan is sick,’ she protested.

‘Not for much longer,’ ‘Archer’ promised, and departed once more, leaving his captives to ponder the implications of this statement.

Tegan rose to her elbows and looked up at Laird, a worried expression on her face.

‘One way or another,’ she said grimly, ‘we’re both dead.’

The two women resolved to proceed with their planned decoy, despite their shared conviction that it had a minimal chance of success. Once they had finished attempting to cover the cylinder in the cot to resemble a body, Tegan wanted to leave immediately. ‘Let’s go,’

she urged.

‘... No,’ Laird shook her head. ‘I should stay.’

‘Don’t be silly! They’ll kill you.’

‘No, not if you can get help quickly.’ Laird pointed to the bed. ‘This isn’t going to deceive anyone for long unless there is someone here to help it along with a little bluff. Now, you’re wasting time; go, go!’ She pushed Tegan frantically towards the exit. ‘Good luck.’

Tegan paused before departing. ‘And you - I’ll be as quick as I can,’ she promised, and was gone.



9

Self-Destruct

Davros completed a tour of inspection of Styles' former laboratory, watched by Kiston and two of the three Daleks who had escorted him from his prison cell.

'Primitive, but adequate,' he said at last.

'It is vital you complete your researches as soon as possible,' one of the Daleks informed him.

'I will need a sample of the Movellan virus.'

'It will be brought to you,' replied the Dalek.

'I will also need two Daleks.' Davros paused, then added, 'For experimentation.'

'That is forbidden,' the Dalek stated bluntly.

'If I am to find a cure, I will need living Dalek tissue!' Davros protested.

The second Dalek spoke up. 'We must consult the Supreme Dalek.'

'Do so,' Davros urged. 'But be quick!'

The Daleks turned and left.

'Already I grow impatient!' Davros told Kiston.

Kiston had activated the laboratory security system. The monitor screen now showed a white uniformed, fair-haired bespectacled man walking towards the laboratory. This was the chemist Davros had been promised.

'A further recruit,' murmured Davros, and pressed a switch on his chair. The probe rose into his palm as before and he handed it to Kiston. 'Initiate him,' he instructed.

Kiston moved to the door and stood against the wall as the door slid open and the chemist entered. He did not see Kiston.

'Welcome,' Davros greeted him.

Kiston stepped quickly behind the man and pressed the probe against his neck. The man's face contorted in pain.

Davros watched the scanner screen with the newly-recruited chemist standing silently beside him. On the screen, a trooper was making his way towards the laboratory.

'My army continues to grow,' Davros murmured. Kiston stood beside the door as before, the probe held ready.

Mercer led his group including Turlough along a corridor until they reached a 'T'-junction.

Mercer approached a door.

‘It’s here,’ he announced.

‘It isn’t guarded,’ Styles observed, as they approached cautiously.

‘Be grateful,’ came Mercer’s reply.

‘What is it?’ Turlough dared to inquire.

Mercer turned to him. ‘Self-destruct chamber.’

Turlough swallowed, not liking the sound of that one bit.

Styles went up to the door.

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‘Right; let’s get it open.’ She pulled off her left glove with her teeth, and tapped a code in to the entry mechanism.

‘What are you going to do?’ Turlough asked.

Styles turned to him with a disbelieving expression. ‘Guess!’

The space station’s self-destruct chamber was lit by an eerie blue light. The centre of the room was dominated by a circular console atop which was mounted a large transparent dome, housing a complex array of electronics controlling the priming and detonation of the explosive device.

Styles stared at the doomsday machine, looking a little overwhelmed as she drummed her fingers on the dome in apparent frustration. She looked up at her companions, whose attentions were also fixed on the dome. ‘Where do we start?’ she asked of no-one in particular.

Turlough looked at her, worried.

Styles stripped off the cumbersome breastplate of her ‘borrowed’ uniform and studied the console again. The others stood and watched. ‘It looks complicated,’ she observed worriedly.

‘Try the computer,’ Mercer suggested helpfully. ‘It may contain the ignition sequence.’

‘And when your bomb is primed, is it absolutely necessary that we die along with the station?’ Turlough challenged.

Mercer and Styles exchanged a glance.

‘Look, none of us are looking to become martyrs,’ Styles replied wearily. ‘Do you know a way out?’

‘The time corridor I mentioned. It exists; it’s real!’ Turlough insisted. ‘We could use it to escape.’

Mercer turned to Styles again. ‘What do you think?’ he asked her.

‘You could check it out; while I try and find a way into this thing,’ Styles conceded, resting her elbows on the dome and gazing into it.

Mercer came to a decision. ‘Right...’ He picked up his weapon.

‘Good luck,’ murmured Styles.

Mercer directed Turlough towards the door. ‘Move!’

Commander Lytton was making his way through the passages of the Dalek ship when his helmet comlink buzzed. He stopped and pulled his throat mike into position. ‘Lytton.’

‘This is the Supreme Dalek,’ said the grating voice in his ears. ‘The self-destruct chamber has been invaded. The hostiles must be exterminated.’

‘There isn’t time,’ Lytton replied.

‘Abandon the space station.’

‘You should have anticipated this.’

‘The original plan was to snatch Davros and leave; not dance to his every whim.’

‘Nothing must endanger Davros. The hostiles must be destroyed,’ the Supreme Dalek stated bluntly. ‘The Daleks must be obeyed!’

Lytton angrily cut the connection and contacted Sub-Commander Grogan as he headed at a run for the airlock.

ACCESS TO SELF-DESTRUCT PROCEDURE IS CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

PLEASE INSERT YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE NUMBER: _____

‘Thanks a lot!’ Styles scowled at the message that had appeared on the computer screen in the self-destruct chamber, and then turned to her companion. ‘Zena?’

Zena came over and studied the message. ‘Lieutenant Mercer might have security clearance,’ she suggested.

‘That’s a point,’ Styles agreed. ‘Get him on the radio.’

‘The Daleks could trace the transmission,’ Zena pointed out.

‘Well he can’t have got far. Try him on an ultra high frequency range. The Daleks can’t monitor them all.’ Styles instructed.

Zena complied, and Styles tried finding him using the station’s security cameras. One after another, shots of different corridors come up on the screen. The first was empty, as was the second, but a third showed a squad of troopers led by Lytton approaching.

‘That’s outside!’ Styles exclaimed. ‘Close the door! Dalek troopers!’

Zena dived for the door control, but Doran, who had been guarding the entrance, ducked in and slammed his hand against the mechanism. The door slid shut - just as the troopers arrived.

Lytton glared furiously at the sealed off entrance to the self-destruct chamber. ‘They must have seen us,’ he concluded, looking around, noticed the light winking on a security camera further along the corridor.

‘Take out that camera!’ he ordered, and a trooper fired up at it, shattering the lens.

The screen went blank. Styles crossed to the controls of the self-destruct device.

‘Build a barricade,’ she instructed Zena and Doran. ‘Something we can use for protection to fight from behind.’ She concentrated on the console controls, aware that if she operated them correctly, the dome would open. ‘Now... There’s nothing to lose...’ she muttered to herself. ‘Let’s see if I can make any sense out of these...’ She started activating a series of dials on top on the console.

A trooper worked on the door-opening mechanism of the self-destruct chamber. Lytton and Grogan were inspecting the side wall of the chamber.

‘Can we blow a hole in the wall?’

‘Of course,’ Grogan agreed without hesitation.

‘Then we attack on two fronts.’

While Styles fiddled with the controls on the console, Zena and Doran pulled out wall panels and propped them up against each other to form a barricade.

Suddenly a bank of red lights flickered on within the dome, and Styles reacted excitedly. ‘I think I’m making progress!’

‘Nearly ready,’ Stien reported.

‘The prisoner is secured. You must proceed alone,’ a Dalek instructed. ‘We have been summoned to other duties.’

‘Not staying to the bitter end?’ inquired the Doctor. ‘How disappointing!’

The Dalek swung back to face him. ‘When it is time to die, you will, in your agony, beg to pay homage to the Daleks.’

The Daleks glided towards the exit, pausing to instruct the troopers guarding the door to wait outside.

‘Why do they take themselves so seriously...?’ the Doctor pondered, when the door had shut and he and Stien were alone in the room.

‘I warned you not to provoke them,’ Stien rebuked him. ‘You only make it worse for yourself.’

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‘Get on with it,’ the Doctor snapped. ‘I can do without your pity.’

Stien looked startled. ‘Do you think I do this because I enj... Do you think I do this out of c-c-choice?’ he stuttered defensively. He sounded scared and unsure of himself. ‘D-d-do I have a c-c-choice?’ Stien wondered aloud, and then seemed to reach a decision. ‘I have no choice.’

The Doctor looked at him, wondering about the depth of Stien’s loyalty to the Daleks.

Turlough and Mercer moved stealthily into the chamber of Airlock Three, and hid behind the remains of the barricade from the battle some hours earlier. Their presence went unnoticed by two Dalek troopers who were guarding the crossover point between the station and the Dalek ship.

‘The time corridor is on the other side of the airlock,’ Turlough whispered.

‘What about the troopers?’ Mercer whispered back.

‘We kill them,’ Turlough said, and began to move away from the barricade.

At this point two Daleks glided across from the ship and entered the station. Turlough ducked back down.

‘But the Daleks,’ Mercer objected. ‘We must set the self-destruct mechanism first. We go back...’

‘No!’ Turlough groaned.

‘We go back!’ Mercer insisted, and levelled his gun at Turlough’s face.

They went back.

The door of Davros’s laboratory slid open, and the two Daleks witnessed earlier by Turlough and Mercer in the airlock entered.

‘We have been sent by the Supreme Dalek,’ one of the Daleks intoned.

‘We are to assist in your research,’ its companion added.

‘I need Dalek tissue, not help,’ Davros objected.

‘You may remove tissue from us.’

‘Excellent,’ Davros purred. ‘In no way will my experiment harm you.’ The Dalek creator signalled to Kiston, who moved to his side as the probe rose once more from Davros’s chair. Kiston secreted it behind his back.

‘Releasing locking clamp,’ the Daleks reported, and there was a loud click, followed by an electronic hum as their domes, hinged at the front, tilted forward.

Kiston moved into position behind the first one, reached inside the casing and jabbed the mutated creature with the probe.

‘In fact,’ Davros continued, as Kiston repeated the process with its companion, ‘you will become considerably invigorated.’

Kiston stepped back, and Davros declared, ‘Perfect! Reseal your casings.’ The Daleks complied.

‘Now... Who do you obey?!’ Davros demanded.

The Daleks’ voices were slightly wavery as they replied in unison. ‘We obey Davros!

He is our master!’

‘Excellent! Now all I require is a sample of the Movellan virus,’ Davros said, and turned to Kiston. ‘Find out the cause of the delay!’

Kiston patched into the Dalek command net using the laboratory’s communications console.

The Supreme Dalek received the transmission and reached a decision. ‘Order a cylinder of Movellan virus to be transported from Earth.’

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‘I obey,’ replied the Systems Coordinator, and detailed the Dalek Commander to take charge of the task.

Lytton paced impatiently up and down the corridor as his troopers busily detached a wall panel and began to fit explosive charges in the cavity.

As he turned way, two figures appeared at the end of a side corridor and then ducked back out of sight before they were detected.

In the side corridor, Mercer turned on Turlough.

‘We must do something,’ he insisted frantically.

‘With only one gun?’ They’d kill us.’

‘I have to do something.’

‘Think about what’s happening.’ Turlough suggested, trying to calm Mercer down.

‘The Daleks have a ship; so why are their troopers trying to break into the self-destruct chamber? Why don’t they leave and let your friends blow themselves to pieces?’

‘Tell me.’

‘Because whatever the Daleks came for is still on board.’

‘Davros?!’ Mercer exclaimed.

‘Who?’ Turlough was puzzled.

‘The Daleks’ creator,’ Mercer explained quickly. ‘We were keeping him prisoner aboard this station!’

‘You may not be able to help your friends - but you could still kill him.’

Mercer saw the sense in this, and hurriedly led Turlough down a few deserted passages until they reached the station’s prison cell. The door was open, and cautiously, the pair entered the room. Before them was the empty cryogenic containment chamber that had once held Davros.

‘We’re too late,’ Turlough observed, relieved that they could now turn their attention to getting to Earth.

‘He can’t be far,’ Mercer reasoned.

Turlough sighed. ‘We could spend hours searching and still not find him. And the place is crawling with Daleks.’

‘I have to find him,’ Mercer insisted, raising his gun once more to convince Turlough.

‘And you’re coming with me.’

Laird was sitting beside the cot when she heard a sudden dense humming sound, which seemed to expand to fill the room. A ruby red haze enveloped one of the cylinders half-buried in the earth in the corner of the room as Laird watched in terror, fearing that the objects were, after all, unexploded bombs that had just now been activated. The sound grew in intensity and the cylinder slowly faded away, leaving a deep impression in the soil.

Laird put her hands over her ears in pain, and collapsed on the cot, sobbing.

The Dalek Commander and two troopers watched as the time corridor terminal shutter opened to reveal the cylinder sitting on the floor of the chamber.

‘Take the cylinder to Davros,’ the Commander instructed.

The troopers stepped forward and gingerly picked it up. They carried it away carefully between them, followed at a short distance by the Commander. All three knew the devastating consequences if the contents of the cylinder were to be released on board the ship.

The troopers carrying the cylinder of Movellan virus, escorted by the Dalek Commander, reached the door of the laboratory. The door slid open and the two troopers entered with the cylinder, while the Dalek Commander moved on to supervise another prob-59

lem.

As it moved away down the corridor, Turlough and Mercer emerged from a side corridor where they had hidden as the procession approached.

‘Of course!’ Mercer exclaimed, realising the significance of what they had just seen.

‘Davros is using Styles’s laboratory!’

Inside the laboratory, the cylinder was placed carefully within a dome-shaped gas-tight container which was then sealed shut. Rubber gloves attached to the wall of the chamber enabled the chemist to work on the cylinder without risk of contaminating the entire area with the virus.

‘Perfect,’ Davros murmured, and turned to the two troopers who had brought the cylinder in and were now about to leave. ‘I have but one more request...’

The troopers paused, unaware that Kiston was moving behind them.

‘I require your co-operation for a little longer,’ Davros told them, and his Daleks advanced behind him.

Realising that something wasn’t quite right, one of the troopers raised his gun, but Kiston knocked him down from behind and wrenched the other man’s weapon away from him.

‘A spirited, but foolish reaction!’ Davros exclaimed almost admiringly. ‘He will make an excellent slave, and so will you...’

Kiston reached up and jabbed the probe into the back of the second trooper’s neck.

Professor Laird was still lying on the cot where she had fallen, when the duplicates of Archer and Calder entered. As soon as she was aware of their presence, she leapt to her feet.

‘One of the cylinders has disappeared,’ she blurted out.

‘Calder’ reached over and pulled off the blanket. Laird made a move to try and stop him, but the incriminating cylinder was revealed.

‘Archer’ grabbed her arms from behind, and twisted them back. ‘Where is she?’ he demanded. ‘Where is she?’

Despite the pain she was in, Laird remained tight-lipped.

‘She won’t get far,’ ‘Archer’ stated dismissively, and pulled her roughly from the room.

Tegan had made her way to the main doors of the warehouse without detection, but was dismayed to find them locked. She rattled them and then spun round and leaned against them, fearful that she might have been heard. After calming her nerves, she finally located an escape route through a broken window in the end wall of the warehouse. Outside, she found herself in a narrow alleyway, and after a moment to regain her bearings, hurried off.

Two tall uniformed figures stepped out of the shadows and impassively watched her as she headed for the wharf .

Tegan arrived back where the TARDIS had landed, half-expecting the familiar blue police box to still be there waiting for her. It wasn’t, and she felt an overwhelming sense of loss. The Doctor had abandoned her without so much as saying goodbye.

It dawned on Tegan that she hadn't exactly planned for this contingency. She walked up to the edge of the wharf and looked out across the River Thames. The river traffic was very sparse and was keeping nearer the north bank. Tower Bridge loomed over to her left, but again she doubted that anyone would notice her from that distance.

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Tegan turned to go back up the alley, and as she did so, saw to her relief a couple of policemen walking in her direction. She smiled and started towards them, but stopped short as one of them drew a long, ugly-looking gun and pointed it at her.

She turned and dashed along the embankment, and within moments reached the end, which overlooked the muddy river's edge, exposed by the low tide.

There was someone down there on the mud, a treasure-seeker scanning the silt with a metal detector. 'Hey!' Tegan called to him and waved her arms frantically, but the man was wearing headphones attached to his detector equipment, and had his back to her.

Tegan started down the steps leading down to the mud, just as the policemen arrived at the end of the wharf. The nearest of the pair raised his pistol, and Tegan froze, halfway down the steps. She stole a glance at the man with the metal detector, still too engrossed in his pursuit to notice the drama unfolding close by.

The policeman followed her gaze and swung the barrel of his gun across and fired once.

The man fell face down in the mud, a wisp of smoke rising from his back.

Tegan looked up sickened at the policeman. 'No!!'

The two oddly silent policemen escorted Tegan to the doors of the warehouse, where they were met by the duplicates of Archer and Calder, who marched her into the building and up the stairs to the upper level, where Professor Laird stood guarded by other two duplicated soldiers.

'I'm sorry. I tried,' said Tegan bitterly when she saw Laird, her thoughts preoccupied with the murder of the innocent bystander.

'They're going to send us to the Dalek ship,' Laird told her.

'Get them into the time corridor,' 'Archer' instructed.

Laird suddenly shoved her guard away and dashed for the exit, but 'Archer' raised his revolver and gunned her down callously. Laird screamed once, and collapsed in a heap near the door.

‘No!!’ shouted Tegan, but it had happened so quick that her objection was already too late. She turned away, her eyes shut tight against the pain of loss. First the metal-detector man, now Professor Laird - when would the senseless killing end?

‘Into the time corridor with her,’ she heard ‘Archer’ order, and opened her eyes again as

‘Calder’ moved forward and shoved her.

Numbed by the deaths she had recently witnessed, Tegan offered no resistance as she stumbled towards the middle of the room, and was quickly enveloped in a red glow.

Styles finally bypassed the security access code. The protective dome revolved open with an electronic whine. Lights flashed across the surface of the now-exposed destructor mechanism.

‘Nearly there!’ she announced cheerily, and then paused for a moment and held her hands to her face. ‘Why am I getting so excited?’ she muttered. ‘This is the last thing I shall ever do...’

Zena and Doran continued to construct a barricade from the wall panels. Zena crossed to the door and placed an ear against it. She turned to Styles with a worried expression on her face. ‘They’re bypassing the door mechanism!’

Styles began hurriedly adjusting the controls. ‘You must hold them. I’m almost there.’

The trooper working on the door-opening mechanism of the self-destruct chamber had now completely dismantled it. He moved away, and Lytton approached the door.

‘Stand by,’ he instructed, and put his helmet on.

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Styles stood over the self-destruct console with a weary smile on her face. ‘That’s it!’ she announced.

‘Wish I could say I was pleased,’ Zena admitted.

A sequence of lights on the console flashed, and a klaxon sounded. Styles stood back from the console, suddenly awed by the action she was about to perform. ‘Any last words?’

Zena smiled sadly. ‘Why prolong it with a few hackneyed cliches?’

‘Why indeed,’ Styles agreed, and went back to reach for the large red lever which controlled detonation.

At that moment, the door slid rapidly open, and Lytton burst through the gap, firing as he came. Styles fell, screaming.

Zena and Doran ducked behind the console and fired back, but an explosion in the wall beside them killed Doran, and a trooper fired through the hole it created, killing Zena instantly.

The troopers poured in through both entrances. Styles, her head bleeding, crawled across the floor towards the console. She almost made it.

As she reached out to pull herself up to the console, she looked up and saw Lytton standing over her. He fired once, and then stepped over her body to get to the console.

Grogan was already at the controls, deactivating the self-destruct mechanism. Other troopers began clearing away the bodies and debris.

‘Just in time,’ Grogan reported, disarming the mechanism.

The Dalek Commander glided into the chamber. ‘Your delay put the Dalek plan at risk,’ it told Lytton.

‘We won,’ Lytton replied. ‘That’s all that matters.’

‘The Space Station could have been destroyed. I must report this to the Supreme Dalek,’ the Dalek informed him, and left the chamber.

Lytton glared after it.

Turlough pulled Mercer back under cover. ‘There’s nothing you can do,’ he told the lieutenant.

Mercer was distraught. ‘I shouldn’t have left them!’

‘You did the right thing,’ Turlough assured him. ‘It’s now up to you. We have to get back to Earth.’ He began heading off up the corridor.

Mercer was still staring back at the self-destruct chamber as a couple of troopers removed Styles’ broken and blood-stained body. We might have been friends, he thought bitterly.

Turlough turned back and took hold of his arm gently. ‘Trust me!’

Mercer’s pained expression reformed into one of angry determination for revenge, and dashed off down the passage.

Turlough sighed and set off after him.

The chemist was in the process of transferring some of the Movellan virus from the cylinder to much smaller blue egg-shaped containers within the gas-tight chamber. Davros and the two Daleks watched.

Kiston turned from the communications console, having just received a message from the Supreme Dalek. He moved close to Davros and whispered, ‘The Daleks have secured the self-destruct chamber. The station is safe.’

‘Excellent!’ Davros declared.

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‘And the Daleks have taken the Doctor prisoner,’ Kiston added.

‘Better still. He must be brought to me at once. Hurry. There is important work to do.’

As Kiston moved back to the communicator, Davros began musing to himself. ‘I have waited a long time for this. Once the Doctor is exterminated, I shall build a new race of Daleks. They will be even more deadly...’ Davros’s voice began to rise as it took on an even more fanatical tone. ‘And I, Davros, shall be their leader. This time we shall triumph!

My Daleks shall once more become the Supreme Being!!’

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10

Redemption

Stien stood poised over the duplicator device console. ‘Are you ready?’ he inquired.

The Doctor lay strapped to the couch, electrodes attached to his head and neck. He frowned. ‘You ask as though I had a choice.’

Stien left his position at the controls and moved to the Doctor's side. 'Everyone has a c-c-choice,' he explained, clearly bothered by the Doctor's question. 'It's in the C-C-Constitution. Tw-Tw-Twenty-Fifth Amendment... Or is it the Twenty-Sixth? Didn't you go to school?'

'I must have played truant that day,' the Doctor replied. 'Or maybe we didn't go to the same school. Which school did you go to?'

Stien rubbed his brow, his face betraying the confusion he felt in his mind. 'I c-c-can't remember,' he confessed.

'But you remembered one of the Amendments!' the Time Lord persisted. 'What was the First? I know; it's very important you remember too!'

Stien gazed across the room, deep in tortured thought.

'Think man! Search the area of your mind the Daleks have shut off,' the Doctor encouraged him. 'Resist! Before it's too late.'

'I must c-c-concentrate...' Stien muttered slowly.

'Resist!' the Doctor insisted.

'I must c-c-continue...' Stien returned to the controls, and pressed the button that activated the device.

The Doctor's face contorted in pain.

Stien went over and switched on a reel-to-reel recording mechanism mounted on the wall. A monitor screen above it came to life displaying images of the Doctor's past lives and companions as the machine delved deeper into his memories...

...Turlough, Tegan, Nyssa, Adric, Romana, K9, Leela, Harry, his fourth incarnation...

The Time Lord moaned in agony.

'Relax Doctor,' Stien advised. 'Don't fight it.'

...Sarah Jane, Jo Grant, Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, Liz Shaw, his third self...

'You'll only cause yourself pain,' Stien told the Doctor. 'I-I know how you feel. The pain will pass. You must relax.'

'Quickly! Recite the Amendments,' the Doctor urged. 'Remember your past!'

'I must do my duty...' Stien muttered uncertainly.

'You must resist!' the Doctor screamed. 'You're destroying my mind!'

...Zoe Heriot, Victoria Waterfield, Jamie McCrimmon, his second self...

Gradually the Doctor's cries of agony were accompanied by Stien's own tortured screams as he held his hands to his temples.

...Ben Jackson, Polly, Dodo Chaplet, Sara Kingdom, Steven Taylor, Vicki, Barbara Wright, Ian Chesterton, Susan, his original self...

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'I can't stand the confusion in my mind!' Stien yelled, and staggered to the controls, where he hit the abort switch.

'Quickly,' the Doctor gasped from the couch. 'Release me.'

Stien hurried over and undid the straps restraining the Doctor. 'What about the guards?'

he asked.

The Doctor sat up, ripping off the electrodes from his face and neck. 'We'll call them in here,' he said.

Mercer ran towards Airlock Three, blaster raised and wild with revenge. Turlough was having trouble keeping up with him. Without pausing, Mercer gunned down the two troopers guarding the airlock and then ran on into the gleaming white interior of the Dalek ship.

Turlough paused to acquire a blaster from one of the bodies, then hurried after Mercer.

Tegan materialised in the time corridor terminal and emerged from under the rising shutter door into the reception area. She was relieved to find it deserted and was greeted by the comfortingly familiar shape of the TARDIS standing unobtrusively in one corner. As she started towards the police box, a trooper came charging into the chamber brandishing a blaster. Tegan gasped and put her hands to her face, awaiting the end. She heard a thump, and removed her hands to see her assailant lying spread-eagled on the floor. Standing over him, holding a blaster, was someone she'd never been happier to see in all the time they'd known each other.

'What are you doing?' Turlough demanded of the man on the floor.

'She was about to scream,' Mercer explained defensively, getting back to his feet.

'It's Tegan, you fool,' Turlough snapped at him, and then went over to her, adding more tenderly, 'she's a friend.'

Tegan found her voice at last. ‘Turlough,’ she sighed thankfully, inwardly marvelling at her companion’s rare display of bravery. ‘Who’s this?’

‘Never mind that,’ said Turlough. ‘We must get away before the Daleks arrive.’

‘Not without the Doctor,’ Tegan insisted firmly.

Turlough looked surprised. ‘He’s here?’

‘Look behind you,’ Tegan advised, pointing.

Turlough looked, and seeing the TARDIS, smiled for the first time in many hours.

Kiston had managed to patch into the Dalek surveillance systems, and the scanner screen now displayed images from the Dalek ship. Under Davros’s instruction, Kiston displayed various areas of the craft; including the time corridor reception area. They watched as Tegan, Turlough and Mercer left the chamber, but they were of no interest to Davros. His attention was focused on the police box which stood in one corner of the room. He recognised this shape from the information he’d gleaned from the Daleks’ information store. He also knew its significance.

Davros turned to his Daleks. ‘You must secure the TARDIS for me,’ he instructed.

‘Take the troopers.’

‘We obey,’ the Daleks replied in unison, and left with the three troopers.

Turlough led Tegan and Mercer along a passage he’d explored when he’d first arrived on the Dalek ship.

‘In here,’ Turlough said, opening a door in the wall.

Tegan gasped in horror at the sight of the bodies of Archer, Calder and Mellor still lying on the floor. Tegan had already concluded that the soldiers must have been killed by 65

their duplicates, but the realisation had not prepared her for the experience of unexpectedly seeing the bodies.

There was no time to hesitate - Tegan, Turlough and Mercer hurried inside and closed the door just as a Dalek glided past.

In the duplicator room, the two troopers had been lured in by Stien and their weapons seized. The Doctor and Stien held them at gunpoint.

‘Now what?’ Stien asked nervously. ‘The Dalek c-c-conditioning could cloud my mind at any minute.’

‘You’ll be safe in the TARDIS,’ the Doctor assured him.

‘You don’t understand,’ Stien insisted. ‘Under the Dalek influence, I could kill you!’

‘I’ll take that chance,’ the Doctor replied, and swung round to train his blaster on the door as it slid open.

Mercer and Turlough stood in the doorway, their own weapons raised. Tegan pushed between them. ‘Doctor!’

The Time Lord smiled with relief to see his friends alive and unharmed. ‘Well don’t just stand there,’ he grinned. ‘Come and help!’

Stien herded the troopers up against a wall. ‘Over there - move!’

Lytton had rejoined the Supreme Dalek on the bridge of the Dalek ship. They watched on the scanner screen as the Doctor, Mercer and Stien strapped the two troopers to the couch in the duplicator room.

‘The Doctor is free,’ the Supreme stated, almost accusingly. ‘Your troopers have failed.’

‘More to the point, where were your Daleks?’ Lytton replied curtly. He strode off the bridge, activating his helmet communicator as he went. ‘This is Lytton. Call out my Special Guard.’

‘Lytton grows so arrogant,’ the Supreme Dalek observed. ‘His mind resists our control.

He must be exterminated as soon as it is convenient to the Daleks.’

As the troopers were being secured, Turlough looked around and suddenly noticed a camera lens high up on the wall. He urgently drew the Time Lord’s attention to it. ‘Doctor -

look. We should get out of here.’

‘Quickly,’ the Doctor agreed, and led the way to the exit. ‘Come on.’

When Tegan, Turlough, Stien and Mercer had left, the Doctor raised his blaster and fired across the room. The tape spool containing the Doctor’s memories exploded into flame.

The group entered the TARDIS console room, and the Doctor immediately began to set the coordinates.

‘Where are we going?’ Tegan wanted to know.

‘Earth,’ the Doctor replied without looking up.

‘Best news all day,’ said Turlough with feeling.

The Doctor paused in his calculations and glanced up at Stien. ‘Why have the Daleks rescued Davros?’ he asked.

‘They want a cure for the virus that’s destroying them.’

‘Is that what’s in those cylinders on Earth?’ Tegan asked.

‘Yes,’ Stien confirmed.

‘Why Earth?’ the Doctor queried.

‘They were safer there and they acted as a lure,’ Stien explained. ‘With the bomb dis-66

posal squad duplicated, the Daleks had people to guard the warehouse who wouldn’t arouse suspicion.’

‘Very neat,’ said Tegan sarcastically.

‘The Daleks haven’t lost any of their old guile,’ Stien observed.

The Doctor appeared to come to a sudden decision. He activated the door control and made to leave.

‘Where are you going?’ Tegan asked.

The Doctor turned. ‘To kill Davros,’ he stated simply, his face an unreadable mask.

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11

Executioner

Tegan was horrified. ‘Doctor!’

‘I must!’ the Doctor insisted. ‘Davros created the Daleks. He must not be allowed to save them.’

‘But murder?’

‘Once before I held back from destroying the Daleks. It was a mistake I do not intend to repeat. Davros must die!’

Mercer stepped forward. ‘I’m coming with you.’

‘No.’

‘I can show you where he is,’ the Lieutenant argued.

‘I’m coming too,’ added Stien. ‘I wouldn’t mind a taste of revenge.’

‘All right,’ the Doctor conceded reluctantly, and turned to Tegan and Turlough. ‘Wait as long as you can. But should the Daleks attack, you leave at once.’

‘But what about you?’ Tegan demanded.

The Doctor looked at her for a moment in silence, and then turned and left, followed by Mercer and Stien.

Tegan gave Turlough an appalled look.

On the laboratory scanner screen, Davros and Kiston watched as the Doctor was led through the station airlock by Stien and Mercer, as though they were prisoner and escort.

Stien and Mercer carried lasers, but the Doctor was unarmed.

‘Could this be the Doctor?’ Davros wondered.

‘The prisoner is certainly important,’ Kiston observed. ‘The one on the left is Stien, a member of Lytton’s Special Guard. He wouldn’t be assigned to escort duty otherwise.’

Davros turned to Kiston. ‘The Doctor and his TARDIS,’ he mused. ‘Perfect.’

Turlough watched the scanner screen which displayed two Daleks approaching the TARDIS.

‘That’s it,’ he said dismissively. ‘Let’s go. The Doctor’ll never get back.’

‘We wait,’ replied Tegan firmly.

Lytton was leading members of his Special Guard along a corridor of the space station.

They were hunting the Doctor. He raised his right hand and they halted while he spoke into his helmet communicator. ‘Lytton.’

‘Davros has gained control of two Daleks,’ the Dalek Supreme informed him. ‘They are in the reception area attempting to enter the Doctor’s TARDIS. You must exterminate them.’

‘At once,’ Lytton confirmed.

‘You must also destroy Davros!’ the Supreme added. ‘He is unreliable. He cannot be trusted.’

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Lytton switched off his com-link and turned to Grogan. ‘Take two men and kill Davros,’ he instructed. ‘I’m going to the reception area.’

The door of Davros’s laboratory slid open and the Doctor, Mercer and Stien entered. Mercer and Stien stood on guard by the door, their weapons raised. Mercer had a second laser clipped to his belt.

‘Welcome, Doctor...’ said Davros, as the Time Lord stepped forward. ‘I have waited many years for this meeting.’

‘I’m sorry to have detained you,’ the Doctor replied.

‘It was but a pleasure deferred.’ Davros’s voice hardened. ‘Now you are here, you will repay tenfold for the mental agony I have suffered.’

‘I’ll say one thing for you, Davros. Your conversation is totally predictable,’ the Doctor observed. ‘You’re like a deranged child. Always talking of killing, revenge and destruction.’

‘It is the only path to ultimate power.’

‘But to what end?’ the Doctor asked. ‘Just more suffering for those unfortunate enough to survive.’

‘Only for those who resist my will.’

The Doctor turned to Mercer, who silently handed him his laser.

‘What are you doing?’ Davros asked nervously.

‘Until I walked through that door, I foolishly hoped you had changed enough for me not to have to do this,’ the Doctor said quietly, levelling the gun at Davros’s head.

‘Stien, kill him!’ Davros ordered, on the verge of panic.

‘I’m not here as your prisoner, Davros! But as your executioner.’

Davros became very calm. ‘Listen to me. In your way, you are not an unambitious man.

Like me, you are a renegade,’ he said persuasively.

‘Save your breath,’ the Doctor advised.

Davros chose a different tack. ‘I had planned to completely redesign the Daleks. Kiston will confirm I am telling the truth...’

‘It is so,’ Kiston answered automatically.

‘My mistake was making them totally ruthless. It restricted their ability to cope with creatures who rely not only on logic, but instinct and intuition. That is a factor I wish to correct.’

‘And compassion?’ the Doctor asked, lowering his gun and moving closer. ‘Are they to be programmed for that?’

‘They will learn to recognise the strength that can be drawn from such an emotion.’

‘But only to make the Daleks more efficient killers?’

‘To make them a more positive force,’ Davros insisted.

‘For destruction!’ the Doctor exclaimed.

‘The Universe is at war, Doctor. Name one planet whose history is not littered with atrocities and ambition for empire. It is a universal way of life.’

‘Which I do not accept!’ the Doctor stated bluntly.

‘Then you deny what is real. Join me! You will have total power at the head of a new Dalek army.’

This exchange was interrupted by Stien. ‘Doctor,’ he said urgently, and pointed at the scanner screen, now showing a view of the corridor outside the laboratory.

‘Outside,’ said the Doctor urgently. ‘Deal with them.’

Mercer unclipped his own laser from his belt, and then he and Stien left.

‘To be honest, Davros,’ the Doctor said, aiming his laser at the Dalek creator once 69

more, ‘I wouldn’t know what to do with an army.’

In the TARDIS console room, Tegan and Turlough listened to the sound of Dalek lasers as Davros's Daleks attempted to break through the TARDIS's defences.

'Don't look so worried,' Tegan told Turlough. 'Others have tried to break in before.'

Before Turlough could reply, an electronic noise started to howl from the console.

'What's that?' Tegan asked.

Turlough examined the console readings, and as he did so, the central column started to rise and fall, indicating that the TARDIS was taking off.

'The Doctor pre-set the controls on the timer,' Turlough told her. 'We're going to Earth!'

Tegan stared at him. 'He didn't intend to return,' she said quietly.

The floor suddenly tilted at forty-five degrees, and they clung on to the console. The TARDIS engines began to roar.

'What's happening?' Tegan shouted over the din.

Turlough pulled himself up to get a look at the TARDIS computer screen. 'We're travelling down the Daleks' time corridor. We're being dragged back to the warehouse!'

The two Daleks ceased firing as the police box faded from sight. One Dalek glided over to the wall controls and activated the temporal scanner. 'The TARDIS has entered the time corridor,' it reported.

Its companion moved to the time corridor entrance. 'We will follow and capture it on Earth.'

The Doctor was still pointing his laser at Davros's head.

'You hesitate, Doctor,' Davros observed. 'If I were you, I would be dead.'

'I lack your practise in killing, Davros.'

'You are soft, like all Time Lords,' Davros said scathingly. 'You prefer to stand and watch. Action requires courage; something you lack.'

Stien was attempting to bluff the two troopers outside the laboratory.

'Don't argue,' he barked at them, sergeant-major style. 'You are to report to Commander Lytton at once.'

The troopers' expressions betrayed their lack of conviction.

‘Perhaps I can convince you,’ Mercer suggested, and promptly shot them both dead.

‘Did you have to?’ asked Stien quietly.

Mercer glanced at him contemptuously. ‘Help me with the bodies,’ he instructed. As they dragged them away Stien suddenly stumbled.

‘Now what?’ asked Mercer.

‘The Dalek conditioning...’ Stien explained. ‘It’s starting to take hold again.’

‘You should have stayed in the TARDIS,’ Mercer told him.

A voice said, ‘Drop your guns,’ and Mercer and Stien looked up to see three troopers standing at the end of the corridor, guns raised. These were the troopers Lytton had sent to kill Davros.

Stien recognised their leader, Grogan, and for a moment was confused. ‘It’s all right,’

he assured Mercer. ‘They’re our troopers.’

Mercer stared at him incredulously. ‘They’re Dalek troopers!’ He fired, killing one of them, but the other two fired back, and Mercer fell dead at Stien’s feet.

Stien started firing wildly, killing another trooper. Grogan fired again, and Stien fell to his knees, wounded. Grogan started forward, but Stien found the strength to raise his 70

weapon and fire once at close range.

Grogan died instantly.

Alerted by the sounds of weapons firing, the Doctor backed out of the laboratory, his gun still trained on Davros.

Outside in the corridor, Stien was lying against a wall next to the bodies of the troopers and Mercer. He raised his laser as the Doctor approached. ‘Stay where you are!’ he warned.

‘You need medical attention,’ the Doctor told him, crouching down beside him.

‘I can’t control my mind. I’m not safe. I caused Mercer’s death... I’ve got to get away from here.’ Stien stood up painfully.

‘No, wait!’ the Doctor insisted, leaping to his feet. ‘Look, I can help you. Go back to the TARDIS.’

‘No... Don’t try to follow me,’ Stien advised unsteadily. ‘I may cause your death.’ With that, he ran off down the corridor.

The Doctor looked after him, and then turned to re-enter the laboratory; just as the door slid shut.

‘I’m an imbecile,’ the Doctor muttered, and kicked the door in frustration before heading back towards the Dalek ship and the time corridor terminal.

Lytton was just entering the time corridor reception area, where three of his troopers awaited him, when the Supreme Dalek contacted him on his helmet communicator once more.

‘Your troopers have failed,’ the Dalek reported. ‘Davros still lives.’

‘Then shoot the space station down,’ Lytton advised. ‘Kill everything on it.’

‘I must see him dead. I have despatched Daleks to complete the task you failed. You must redeem yourself. You must destroy the Daleks of Davros.’

‘Where are they?’ asked Lytton.

‘You must follow them to Earth. You must exterminate them.’

Lytton switched off his communicator, went to a wall locker in the reception area, removed a bundle of clothing which he tucked under his arm, and then ushered his troopers into the time corridor terminal...

The TARDIS console room righted itself as the craft landed, and Tegan operated the scanner screen to show a view of the lower level of the warehouse, just outside the entrance to the army camp.

‘What do we do now?’ Turlough asked.

‘We must think,’ replied Tegan. ‘We have to find a way to help the Doctor.’

Stien slowed to a halt in a deserted area of the space station. He leaned against the wall, clutching his side. ‘It isn’t any good,’ he muttered to himself. ‘Got to be more positive.’

He staggered forward and came to a corridor junction. ‘Self-destruct,’ he said. ‘I must find the self-destruct chamber.’

Tegan emerged from the TARDIS and looked around. The lower level of the warehouse appeared to be deserted.

Turlough followed her out, closing the door. ‘This is lunacy,’ he complained.

‘Quiet!’ hissed Tegan. ‘The soldiers might hear you.’

‘What’s the point?’ asked Turlough, as Tegan moved away. ‘We can’t get back to the 71

Dalek ship.’

Tegan turned to face him. ‘The Doctor may get back,’ she insisted. ‘Some other opportunity may arise. I don’t know.’ She moved away again.

‘Absolute madness,’ Turlough muttered.

Tegan stopped at the entrance to the camp site. ‘The virus in those cylinders is the only effective thing we’ve got to fight the Daleks with. Come on!’

She entered the camp, and Turlough reluctantly followed.

Kiston donned his trooper breastplate, gloves and helmet, and then opened a side pouch in the trousers of his uniform. Davros handed him a number of the egg-shaped virus containers prepared by the chemist, and he stowed them in the pouch. ‘Go,’ Davros instructed.

‘Release the virus in the Dalek ship.’

The duplicates of Archer, Calder and Private Mellor hid behind crates on the upper level of the warehouse and watched as two Daleks and three troopers emerged from the time corridor.

‘Davros’s Daleks?’ ‘Calder’ asked ‘Archer’.

‘Archer’ held a small communications device to his ear. ‘They are to be destroyed,’ he reported. ‘It is the Supreme Dalek’s order.’

The duplicate soldiers drew their weapons. One of the Daleks advanced on their hiding place, its eyestalk casting around the room. ‘The TARDIS is not on this level,’ it stated.

‘We must search elsewhere.’

‘Now!’ shouted ‘Archer’, and he and his men emerged from hiding, directing a volley of fire, but the troopers and the Daleks had the superior firepower, and the duplicates died screaming.

Below in the campsite, Turlough looked up nervously at the faintly heard sounds of death.

‘Surely one’s enough?’ he said nervously, and moved away from standing over the buried cylinders to examine the one still lying on the cot where Tegan and Laird had left it.

‘We need another,’ Tegan told him, kneeling in the soil, and trying to dig out a second cylinder unsuccessfully with her fingers. Eventually she conceded his point, and got up, brushing dirt from her hands and legs. ‘All right,’ she said crossly. ‘Let’s get back to the TARDIS.’ She picked up the cylinder from the cot and walked out of the room.

Stien peered through the hole that had been blasted in the side wall of the self-destruct chamber. He moved to the corner of the corridor, saw the two troopers standing on guard at the doorway, and pulled back unseen...

The renegade Daleks and troopers were still searching the upper level of the warehouse.

As they moved into an adjoining room, the time corridor activated again, and Lytton materialised with three troopers.

The Daleks swiftly returned at the sound of the troopers’ materialisation, and Lytton yelled ‘Take cover!’ They all dived behind crates and started firing.

The Dalek commander and two scout warriors stood in the time corridor terminal on the Dalek ship. ‘We are ready to descend,’ reported the Dalek commander to the Supreme Dalek.

‘Everything in the warehouse must be exterminated,’ the Supreme instructed him.

‘Including Lytton and his troopers.’



‘We obey.’

The terminal shutter slid shut - just as the Doctor entered the reception area. Looking around, he saw the locker that Lytton had opened minutes earlier, and going over to inves-tigate, found two small magnetic Dalekenium bombs which he pocketed. He then went over to the terminal controls and pressed a button. The shutter opened for him.

Kiston and the chemist were moving down a corridor towards the Dalek ship when a Dalek appeared behind them. ‘Stop!’ it commanded.

They stopped and turned.

‘Exterminate!’ the Dalek screeched, and blasted them both down. As he fell, a blue egg fell from Kiston’s outstretched hand, unharmed.

The battle on the upper level of the warehouse between Lytton’s troopers and Davros’s Daleks and troopers was continuing. Soon nearly all of the troopers on both sides were dead. As one of the Daleks glided past the body of Lytton, he opened his eyes...

Stien braced himself, and then emerged from around the corner, catching the two self-destruct chamber guards by surprise. He gunned them both down before they had time to react. Clutching his stomach in pain, Stien stepped over their bodies and entered the chamber. He smiled grimly.

The Supreme Dalek watched Stien in the self-destruct chamber on its scanner screen.

‘Daleks to the self-destruct chamber,’ it ordered. ‘A hostile has broken in. ‘Emergency!

Emergency! He must be stopped!’

‘We must find the TARDIS. That is our prime mission,’ stated the first Dalek renegade as they patrolled the warehouse. ‘We must obey Davros.’ The renegade Daleks glided away, followed by their one surviving trooper.

Behind them, three more Daleks materialised in the time corridor. The renegades halted. ‘What is happening?’ asked the second Dalek renegade.

‘The Supreme Dalek wishes us destroyed,’ reported the first renegade. ‘We are being attacked. The invading Daleks must be exterminated!’

The Dalek commander started forward, surveying the warehouse. ‘We must find the traitors,’ he instructed his two scouts. ‘The enemies of the Daleks must be destroyed.’

The two renegade Daleks emerged from the shadows. ‘We are not traitors,’ the first renegade replied. ‘We serve our creator, Davros.’

‘The Supreme Dalek is your ruler,’ said the Dalek commander. ‘The Supreme must be obeyed at all times.’

‘Davros must be honoured,’ retorted the first renegade.

‘He must be exterminated!’ the Dalek commander insisted. ‘Nothing must interfere with the true destiny of the Daleks! You must be exterminated!’

This was picked up by the commander’s two scouts who echoed his words,

‘Exterminated! Exterminated!’

The Dalek commander and the first renegade Dalek fired simultaneously, each destroying the other.

In the background, unnoticed by the warring Dalek factions, the Doctor materialised at the end of the time corridor, and dived for cover behind a crate.

Four more Daleks materialised in the warehouse, and while they were still gaining their 73

bearings, the Doctor nipped out from behind his crate and slapped one of the magnetised bombs on a metal plate between one of the Daleks’ sucker arm and gun stick.

He dived back under cover again as the Dalek exploded in a shower of metal, plastic and organic fluids.

The one remaining renegade Dalek was holding its own against the Supreme’s Daleks.

The Doctor moved behind another crate as a Dalek emerged from a doorway, and skimmed the second of his bombs across the floor. It struck the edge of the Dalek’s casing and it erupted in a sheet of flame.

The Doctor emerged from hiding and made a dash for the stairs to the lower level. As he passed, Lytton raised himself on his elbows and fired, but the Time Lord ducked nim-bly out of the doorway.

Tegan and Turlough were crouched on the floor of the TARDIS console room, intently studying the cylinder of Movellan virus, when the doors opened and the Doctor entered.

‘Doctor!’ exclaimed Tegan, intensely relieved to see him safe and unharmed.

‘Well done,’ the Doctor said, observing the cylinder.

Turlough got to his feet. ‘We’ve been trying to open the cylinder,’ he explained. ‘I warned her that she could start an epidemic if she released the virus.’

‘The virus is only partial to Dalek,’ the Doctor explained. ‘It would die once it’s done its work.’

‘What’s happening up on the next floor?’ Tegan wanted to know.

The Doctor looked up. ‘Lunch has arrived for our friend here,’ he quipped, indicating the cylinder.

Tegan winced slightly at the callousness of the Doctor’s off-hand remark, but her feel-ings were plain enough to see. Events had taken their toll on the Doctor’s young Australian companion. The Doctor attempted to give her an apologetic, reassuring smile, then rather self-consciously busied himself at the console.

Davros was at the rear of the laboratory. He pressed a switch on his chair and a portion of the wall slid away to reveal the interior of an emergency escape pod. Wary of her safety, the late Doctor Styles had been careful to maintain an exit for herself in the event of disaster or an attack on the station. The instrumentation indicated that everything was ready for immediate departure.

‘My escape route is prepared,’ he murmured, and closed the shutter before returning to a table where a few blue eggs of the virus sat. He picked one up and crushed it in his hand.

A thick cloud of gas poured out. ‘Now for the Daleks!’ he declared, and threw the container to the floor.

Suddenly the laboratory door exploded and two Daleks entered.

‘I did not summon your assistance!’ Davros shouted.

‘We are here to exterminate you,’ a Dalek announced.

‘By whose order?’ Davros demanded to know.

‘The Supreme Dalek’s,’ replied its companion.

‘Exterminate me and you abandon your lives without purpose. Join me and I will make you rulers of the Universe!’

At this point, both Daleks began spewing foam from their casings.

‘Malfunction! Emergency!’ they began screeching.

‘Your lives are over!’ Davros declared triumphantly.

12

# Final Reckoning

The Doctor located a small panel on the side of the virus cylinder and slid it open. Within was a small valve control, which he operated. ‘Open the doors,’ he instructed, holding the cylinder at arm’s length.

Turlough complied, and the Doctor marched outside.

The cylinder was giving off a lot of gas as he stepped from the TARDIS. He got as close as he dared to the surviving Daleks and placed the cylinder on the floor. As he moved away, they noticed him and fired, but he managed to rush back to the TARDIS

door. Lytton emerged from behind a crate and fired at him, but the Doctor dived inside the TARDIS.

Foam began to spew out of the Daleks. ‘What is happening?’ one of them screeched. ‘I cannot see. My vision is impaired. Emergency!’

The cry was taken up by the other Daleks. ‘Emergency! Emergency!’

Lytton found himself standing by the one surviving trooper; one of Davros’s troopers.

‘They’re going,’ Lytton observed. ‘And so are you!’ He turned and fired at the trooper, who fell.

The Daleks continued to scream. ‘Emergency! I cannot see!’

Lytton turned for one last look at the dead and dying, and then scooped up his bundle from the floor where it had been dropped. It was his police sergeant’s uniform. He ex-tracted the cap and polished the insignia with his elbow as he made for the stairs.

Stien activated a final switch on the self-destruct console, and the controls glowed red.

‘Done it,’ he said to himself. ‘Must rest... tired...’ He leaned back against the wall, clutching his wounded stomach.

The two Daleks in Davros’s laboratory were dead - their casings partially melted and smothered in foam.

‘The Daleks are dead,’ Davros declared triumphantly. ‘Long live the new Daleks.’

He glided across to the shutter concealing his escape pod and opened the shutter. Starting forward, his chair slowed to a halt just as he was about to enter the capsule.

Davros gave an involuntary shudder, and wisps of smoke rose from the console of his chair. ‘What is happening?’ he demanded, but there was no one to answer him. He stared with his one electronic eye as the first tell-tale flecks of foam appeared around his console.

‘No! No! It cannot be!’ he screamed. ‘I am not a Dalek! I cannot die! I am Davrosssss!!’

The Doctor, Tegan and Turlough watched on the TARDIS scanner as the virus-infected Daleks outside in the warehouse juddered in their death throes.

‘It’s over,’ the Doctor announced thankfully, turning away from the scanner.



‘It was horrible,’ Tegan said with feeling.

‘Earth is safe,’ the Doctor tried to reassure her. ‘At least until the Daleks find an antidote for the Movellan virus.’

‘Doctor! Look!’ exclaimed Turlough, pointing at the screen.

The Time Lord whirled around and saw that the warehouse scene had been replaced by a transmission from the Dalek ship. The Supreme Dalek looked down on them from the bridge of his ship.

‘You have not won, Doctor,’ it stated.

‘You won’t be able to invade Earth,’ the Doctor replied.

‘You forget, Doctor. Daleks do not need to invade. I have my duplicates. Some have already been placed in strategic positions around the planet. The collapse of Earth society will soon occur.’

‘Your duplicates are unstable. It won’t work!’ the Doctor told him.

The Supreme Dalek began to rant. ‘That is not true. We shall not fail. The Daleks will triumph! We cannot fail! The Daleks’ true destiny is to rule the Universe!’

Stien awoke from a confused dream of a half-remembered childhood and staggered over to the self-destruct console. Looking up, he saw three Daleks appear in the doorway.

‘Hello boys,’ he said. ‘Just in time for the fun.’

A Dalek fired, and Stien was thrown back against the wall.

He should have died at that moment, but there was some unfinished business to attend to. He rebounded off the wall and in his dying moments, used the momentum to lunge forward on top of the console, and the self-destruct lever.

It took just three seconds for the station's fusion reactor to go critical. In that time the Supreme Dalek received two reports; the first being that an escape pod had ejected from the station's science laboratory, and the second that the self-destruct device had been triggered.

The Dalek Supreme's last action was to order the immediate disengagement and withdrawal of the ship to a safe distance. It was still in the process of sending this when the blast wave reached the bridge and the Supreme boiled away into space with everything else.

The occupants of the TARDIS shielded their eyes from the blinding glare of the explosion.

Moments later, they looked again at the scanner screen, and saw only blazing debris spinning away through space.

No-one spoke for a while.

'The Dalek ship has been destroyed,' the Doctor said quietly. There was no jubilation in his voice. He switched off the scanner screen.

'How?' Turlough asked.

'The self-destruct device on the space station,' the Doctor suggested. The merest hint of a weary smile began to form on the Time Lord's features.

Tegan frowned. 'Davros?'

The Doctor lifted his head. 'No, no; Stien I should think. He must have finally decided which side he was on.' The Doctor abruptly operated the door control and strode out into the warehouse.

The light outside in Curlew Street was fading fast, casting lengthening shadows on the road and brick walls around the warehouse. Two tall men stood rigidly to attention, side by 76

side in the middle of the street. They were dressed in the neat blue attire of police officers.

A third figure emerged from an alleyway; another man in a police uniform, but wearing the greatcoat and cap of a police sergeant. He marched up to his two men, and with mechanical precision, they saluted him.

Satisfied, Lytton turned and strode up the street, his escort silently falling into step behind him...

The Doctor moved from one Dalek to the next, checking both the exploded and virus-infected casings to ensure that they were all well and truly dead.

Turlough looked around at the pathetically huddled bodies of the duplicated troopers and Earth soldiers, their corpses littered around the bases of their deceased mechanical masters - and executioners. 'Are you sure all the duplicates are unsafe?' he asked.

The Doctor looked up from his grisly inspection. 'Oh yes. Now that the Dalek ship has been destroyed, they will all be freed of Dalek control.'

'Shouldn't we inform Earth's authorities?' inquired Turlough, ever-practical.

The Doctor abruptly concluded his task. 'Ah yes, indeed,' he replied unconvincingly.

'Come along,' he urged, and motioned his two companions back to the TARDIS. He pushed the police box door open expectantly.

'I'm not coming with you,' said Tegan quietly.

The Doctor wasn't sure if he'd heard her right. 'I beg your pardon?'

'I'm tired of it,' she explained wearily.

The Doctor looked her in the eyes and was disconcerted to find that they were beginning to fill with tears.

'What's the matter?' he inquired gently, moving closer. He started to place a consoling arm around her, hesitated, and then thrust both hands into his pockets.

'A lot of good people have died today,' Tegan continued. 'I think I'm sick of it.'

The Doctor looked hurt and defensive. 'Do you think I wanted it this way?' he replied almost angrily.

Tegan shook her head vigorously. 'No, it's just that I don't think I can go on.'

The Doctor put her desire into words. 'You want to stay on Earth?' he asked understandingly.

Tegan nodded, and wiped her eyes before replying in a stronger, firmer voice - more as the Tegan of old, the Tegan the Doctor knew well. 'My Aunt Vanessa said when I became an air stewardess, "if you stop enjoying it, give it up."'

At the mention of Tegan's late aunt, the Doctor recalled that fateful day on the Barnet bypass. It seemed so long ago, but somehow he still felt responsible for the incident.

‘Tegan...’ he began, trying to find the words to say.

She held up a silencing hand. ‘It’s stopped being fun, Doctor. Goodbye.’ Tegan inverted her hand and extended it in a gesture of farewell.

The Doctor stared at his feet. Where were the words to make her stay? He raised his eyes once more and silently shook her hand.

‘Turlough.’

Turlough had been lingering in the background, never one to involve himself in emotional scenes. Now he moved forward and shook Tegan’s hand firmly. Their eyes met, and a brief smile passed between them. Theirs had not always been the most amiable of rela-tionships, but they’d been through things together which could not help but bring them close.

‘Goodbye,’ he said.

‘I’ll miss you both,’ Tegan declared, taking the first hesitant steps away from them. She 77

turned and hurried towards the exit.

The Doctor watched her go numbly. Every time a companion left, they took a little piece of himself with them. He thought of Nyssa, Romana, Sarah, Jo, Victoria and his own grand-daughter Susan. There had been so many farewells, but that had never made it any easier to bear the loss.

‘No!’ the Doctor shouted suddenly, surprising even himself.

Tegan hesitated near the door.

‘Don’t leave,’ he pleaded. ‘Not like this.’

‘I must go,’ said Tegan firmly, looking back at the Time Lord for the last time. ‘I’m sorry. Goodbye.’ With that, she left.

The Doctor remained stock-still for what seemed to Turlough to last an eternity. It was as if time was standing still, waiting for the Doctor’s cue to resume its course. Eventually he spoke.

‘It’s... ah... strange,’ he muttered. ‘I left Gallifrey for similar reasons.’ He turned to Turlough as if hoping to elicit a response, but none was forthcoming. ‘I’d grown tired of their lifestyles...’ He paused again, gathering his thoughts. ‘It seems I must mend my ways,’ he said finally, offering the comment almost as an epitaph to their battle with the Daleks.

Turlough glanced around the warehouse, surveying the dead. The Doctor was shoulder-ing too much of the blame for the death toll, but then he always did. Turlough

recalled the Sea Base Four incident. The Doctor had felt personally responsible on that occasion as well, but there was no telling him otherwise. He was broken from his thoughts by a light tap on his shoulder.

‘Come along,’ said the Doctor with forced cheer, and then disappeared through the TARDIS doors.

Turlough took one last look around, and then followed him in, shutting the door behind him.

For a moment there was silence, shattered by the wheezing, groaning sound of the TARDIS’s dematerialisation.

As the police box faded slowly from view, a figure burst back into the room and came to an abrupt halt as the square blue shape faded away and the last lingering whispers of the dematerialisation sound quickly followed.

Tegan had returned - but too late. ‘If’ was a powerful word, as she recalled her father once telling her. Perhaps if she hadn’t lingered, if she’d changed her mind moments earlier... These were questions Tegan failed to answer as she stood alone in the darkening room.

‘Brave heart, Tegan,’ she murmured, recalling the words the Doctor had said to her on many occasions. ‘Doctor, I will miss you.’

# Epilogue

It was hard to believe she was no longer just visiting.

Three years back in the fabric of local time, a younger, considerably less-experienced woman slammed shut the door of a house somewhere in this very same city and ran down the steps to where a vehicle awaited; it would deposit her beside another, very different vehicle to take her far away from the life she had known. She had returned many times since - once for several months, but this time her stay was likely to last a lifetime.

There was no possibility of fitting back into her old life; she had seen and learned too much to ever look at the world around her with quite the same indifference she had once felt. Who could witness life both before the creation and after the destruction of their world and not feel changed by the experience? Knowing that each tomorrow was as much a part of history as yesterday. The challenge - to live with that knowledge without losing her sanity - was as great as any she'd faced in three years of time travel.

The last rays of sunlight were reflected on the gently rippling surface of the River Thames as glistening bands of gold. High above the water, on the Tower Bridge walkway, she stood alone with her thoughts.

Fatigue numbed her mind, and the enduring chill at the closing of the day gnawed at her body. She gazed briefly on the darkening shape of the warehouse, the last point of contact with a myriad of worlds and times. It was over.

Tegan turned away and walked into the gathering darkness.



**Caught in a time corridor, the TARDIS is drawn to an abandoned warehouse in London, 1984 where the Doctor, Tegan and Turlough encounter a bomb disposal squad investigating the discovery of mysterious alien objects.**

**In the far future, the Daleks and their human mercenaries attack a space station prison to release Davros, who has been frozen for ninety years. The Daleks have lost their war with the Movellans and require a cure for the virus that is destroying their race.**

**Davros, however, has other plans for his creations.**

**As the Doctor fights to prevent the Daleks from carrying out their evil schemes, even the TARDIS crew cannot escape untouched by the tragic events unfolding around them...**

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